















## COLLECTED ESSAYS

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# COLLECTED ESSAYS

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TO  
THOSE WHO, LIKE THE AUTHOR OF  
THESE ESSAYS,  
FIND 'THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH A NECESSITY  
OF THEIR NATURE'





## PREFACE

**T**HOUGH all but two of the essays included in these volumes have already appeared in print, it has not hitherto been in an easily accessible form. Both the pamphlets at the beginning of the present collection—*The Presuppositions of Critical History* (the author's earliest work) and *Mr. Sidgwick's Hedonism*—have long been out of print and difficult, if not impossible, to obtain; whilst the *Replies to Criticisms* and the great majority of the Articles have remained scattered, and more or less buried, in the various journals in which they first appeared. Their republication, therefore, seems necessary if they are to be rescued from oblivion; and is more than justified by their intrinsic value, as well as by the light they throw, when read in chronological order, upon the development of the author's views over a period of nearly fifty years.

The present collection also includes, at the end of the second volume, two hitherto unpublished essays, one on *The Treatment of Sexual Detail in Literature*, and an unfinished article, together with an explanatory appendix, on *Relations*.

A List of Abbreviations, by which it is hoped readers may easily find such references as they require, is printed immediately after the Table of Contents; and the order and date of all the author's publications are shown in the Bibliography on pp. 699–700.

We desire to thank the Editors of *Mind*, *The International Journal of Ethics*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, *The Philosophical Review*, and *The Fortnightly Review* for their courtesy in permitting us to republish articles which originally appeared in their Journals; and we are greatly indebted to Mr. G. R. G. Mure, Fellow and Tutor of Merton College, for the time and trouble he has devoted to the preparation of the Index.

M. DE G.

H. H. J.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ethical Studies	= <i>E.S.</i>
Principles of Logic	= <i>L.</i>
Appearance and Reality	= <i>A.R.</i>
Essays on Truth and Reality	= <i>T.R.</i>
Collected Essays	= <i>E.</i>

(A Roman numeral following E indicates the particular Essay)

Mind	= <i>M.</i>
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(The Old and New Series in 'Mind' are indicated by o.s. and n.s., and the volume by a Roman numeral)

*References to the author's works* are to the latest editions, though references (preceded by the sign =) to the earlier editions are added for the convenience of some readers.

*References by the author to the works of other writers* have been retained without alteration.

## THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CRITICAL HISTORY

### PREFACE

THAT the following pages should not go before the public without an apology I am very sensible. Their matter I fear is unsatisfactory, and their manner worse; but no alteration that I could make would be likely to improve either. The reason why these reflections are printed at all is my wish and hope that they may be instrumental in leading some more capable person to clear up and dispose, once and for all, of a subject which ought to be disposed of.

The barbarous title of the following pages anticipates their method, and to some extent their conclusion. Their method consists in taking the existence of certain facts for granted, and in endeavouring to discover the conditions of that existence. These conditions by their absence annihilate the facts; and hence the facts involve them, take them for granted, presuppose them. And the conclusion is that, as the facts *have* presupposed the principle unconsciously, so now in judging we must proceed upon that principle consciously, and use it as a canon.

The subject of critical history is not so narrow as at first sight it might appear. There is no history which in some respects is not more or less critical. No one in the world thinks or could think of inserting into a history of the world *all* the events which have ever been handed down, precisely *as* they have been handed down. But if this is not done, if we exclude or alter or rationalize to the very smallest extent, then we have criticism at once, and we ought to know what criticism means.

That question being asked, it became obvious that

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critical history must have a criterion, and the next matter was to find that criterion. It seemed equally clear after a time that the canon of history was—the historian. This result comes naturally from the consideration of particular historical practice (and in this respect as in others let me acknowledge how much I am indebted to Baur's *Epochs of Church History-writing*)<sup>1</sup> as also from reflection on the psychological aspect of the general question. The historian, as he is, is the real criterion; the ideal criterion (if such an antithesis can be pardoned) is the historian as he ought to be. And the historian who is true to the present is the historian as he ought to be.

This is the main thought in what follows, and, in order to reach such a conclusion, it was necessary to meet antagonistic doctrines at every stage, as well as objections which sprang up in my own mind continually. I have tried so far as possible to avoid wearisomeness, but have not succeeded; and, what is worse, I fear that I may not have succeeded, even at the cost of weariness, either in removing the objections I myself have raised, or in anticipating those which may occur to the reader. I think that in order to have attained a satisfactory result, the whole subject of probability and certainty ought to have been investigated. To this task I felt myself unequal, and my conclusions are hence to some extent precarious.

The preface is already out of proportion to the performance, but I am forced to say a word in conclusion on the application of anything set down here to religious questions. For what I have said I am answerable, but for nothing that any other person chooses to conclude. The view I have put forward is this, that every man's present standpoint ought to determine his belief in respect to *all* past events; but to no man do I dictate what his present standpoint ought to be. *Consistency* is the one word that I have emphasized. I cannot help it if any one thinks that the conclusions of this essay are reconcilable with only one

<sup>1</sup> I may mention here that von Sybel's *Gesetze des historischen Wissens* and Droysen's *Grundriss der Historik* are very brief and well worth reading, though they came to me too late to be of much use.

belief or disbelief. I can only say beforehand that such a man's opinion is not mine. These conclusions, I think, are negative only of a breach between the worlds of the present and the past; and to point out where such a breach exists was not my business, still less my business to express an opinion on the relative truth and falsehood of existing religious beliefs.

If we meddle in any way with the history of certain times, we must touch the element or a part of the element in which hitherto the Christian principle has brought itself home to the religious consciousness. And to a person who identifies the element with that which exists in it, or who believes that the truth of a principle is to be found at the beginning of its temporal development, such modification will doubtless appear an *all-important* matter. That it is important I do not question. I know that it is so. But I know this also, that the extent and generally the nature of the influence, which a modification of history must exercise on religious belief, is a subject on which it is remarkably easy to come to a conclusion, and extremely hard to come to a right one. Courage to express one's views has long ceased to be a virtue. Except where persons are concerned, there is no merit in possessing it, and it is on the fair way to become a vice. And, especially where religion is involved, there is one courage it is well to be free from, the courage to utter one's (mere) opinions.

All that I have left to say<sup>1</sup> is that whatever below may be of use to any one here does not belong to me, except in the sense in which a man's debts are his own. My debt is owing in Oxford, and my use of what I have borrowed is very far from the approach to a payment.

OXFORD  
1874.

<sup>1</sup> I ought to mention that in Note A I have tried to bring the subject home to the general reader, while Note E is not meant for the general reader at all.

## SUMMARY

Critical history involves two sides or elements, 'objective' and 'subjective' (7-8). False account of the relation of these two sides (8-9); refutes itself (10-11).

What is a fact for history? Not a simple datum of the senses (11-12); but a complex totality (13), a judgement (14), and more, a conclusion (14-15). This illustrated (15-17).

Testimony, as experience of others, rests for us on inference from our own experience (17-19). Illustration of this (19-20).

All history has a 'prejudication'. What is this? (20) Omnipresence and uniformity of law. History must assume this and so must science (21-3). Freedom of will no objection to it (23-4).

But what does uniformity in history mean? It means that all historical facts are subject to inference from the present world (24-5).

Objection to this. 'The present world itself depends on testimony' (26). Yes, but the critic's present world ought not so to depend (26-7).

Further objection. 'Then no testimony which goes beyond the analogous can be received' (28). Yes, it can; but only on certain conditions (28-30). Where testimony *must* fail to take us beyond analogy (30-2).

Is historical testimony of this latter sort? (32). What is *historical* testimony? Hard to say (33-4). We must take it to have three characteristics (35-7).

Once more, can historical testimony establish the non-analogous? (38) If it does not go beyond probability, No (38-9). Reasons why it cannot go beyond (39-42).

[Objection. 'This only applies to *existing* historical testimony. But history, as a science, is to rest on scientific evidence' (43). Why this will never be (43-5).]

Result at present obtained (45). Application of this result to historic material. Criticism must be partly negative (46-7), and absolute (47-8). Criticism stands towards tradition in four attitudes (48-51). Criticism not bound to explain everything on pain of retiring from the field (51-3).



## THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CRITICAL HISTORY

**I**N the world the mind makes for the manifestation of itself, and where its life is the process of its own self-realization, there the action and the knowledge of it are children, the hours of whose bringings-forth are never the same, and whose births are divided. Alike in the life of mankind and in the development of the individual, the deed comes first, and later the reflection; and it is with the question, 'What have I done?' that we awake to facts accomplished and never intended, and to existences we do not recognize, while we own them as the creation of ourselves. For a people only in the period of their stagnation, for a person only when the character and the station have become fixed for ever, and when the man is made, is it possible to foreknow the truth of the fresh achievement; and where progress has its full meaning, and evolution is more than a phrase, there the present is hard and the future impossible to discern. Unborn in the substance of the present there lies, it is true, and there lives that future: but the unborn is hidden as yet from the light, and the womb is secret, and the presage doubtful; and the morning of the child's naming is divided by many days from the darkness of begetting and the night of travail.

The sudden act of a moment is unveiled, it may be, to the gradual consciousness of advancing age; and there are seasons again when the slow drift of years comes home with a flash of sweet or sombre revelation; or it may be again that of these experiences neither is given for the time to humanity.

Neither the projection nor the recognition of reality are always the work of an hour; for there are periods when gathering tendencies and accumulation of changes copy their alterations in an altering reflection, when another day dawns through longer twilight, and another

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world more slowly steals on the sense, with its images so strange yet so familiar, and another man awakens through uncertain recollection to the same and yet to a new self-consciousness.

It has been thus with the growth of the critical mind. It fought in the name of another, and not in its own name; it has conquered before it set itself to the battle; and it was first in the making of its realm that it grasped the secret of its mission. The feeling of itself as power came before the knowledge of its purpose, and the passing of the power into act disclosed to it first its own nature. But the advance of its action was gradual, and the consciousness of itself was of equal growth, and with a tardy revelation followed the steps of a slow development.

Within the memory of to-day it has been that historical criticism has asserted and has made good an unabated claim; and with a sudden tide of success has risen to the consciousness of its unabridged mission. With the knowledge of itself it now knows also the purpose of its existence, and the reality which, in the field of its endeavour, belongs to itself and to itself alone.

Criticism has become self-conscious: but to be aware of its aims and the character of its work is one thing; it is another thing to attempt to comprehend the conditions of its being, and the justification of its empire. Such justification it is which historical criticism now mostly needs; for that criticism cannot, except by its actions, justify itself. Confined as it is to one limited sphere, to reflect on the grounds of its existence is for it to pass beyond that sphere; and the principles which regulate its practice are thus, because it cannot account for them, its presuppositions.

This is the subject of that which follows in these pages, and these pages will, so far as possible, be limited to this alone. Nor, however much at first sight it may appear so, will it be found an easy task to investigate the principles of critical history. It is a hard matter, because neither do we know at the outset what we mean by 'critical', nor

shall we learn even at the end what history in general is, nor even assure ourselves of the fact of its existence. We here have enough, and, it may be, more than enough of considerations on history and on the 'science of history', with its actual or possible or impossible reality; but the question, 'When we use the word history what do we mean by it?' is, it would seem, too simple or too trifling a problem to stay the course of our 'advanced thinkers'. And yet the man who, feeling himself unequal alike to support that position or that title, is contented simply, so far as he can, to think, knows all too well that question, and knows it as involving the most difficult problems which philosophy can solve or discuss. Such a man, whatever may be his school, or whatever his principles, will not I know take it amiss in me that I confess at this point my inability, and seek to impose neither on myself, nor on his understanding, nor on the ignorance of the public. And so to begin——

It has been often remarked that, by whichever of the terms now in use we express it, history has still a double meaning. 'Geschichte' does not simply stand for 'Was geschieht', and *istoria* would not merit its name were it nothing beyond the inquiries of the historian. Starting from different sides these words are extended, each to the same totality, by a broad or, if any one pleases, by a loose signification.

It might, I believe, be maintained plausibly, and perhaps even with serious conviction, that these two elements, that of events in time on the one side and, on the other side, that of recollection in the mind, were in history necessarily united; in this sense that a bare series of momentary occurrences cannot contain that without which history has no right to be named as history.

But such a discussion lies beyond our subject, and we must be content here both to assume an historical past of humanity, in the absence even of a recording subject, and to leave the assertion of a merely 'objective' history of Nature to stand or to fall untouched by us.

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We do not question that history apart from the historian does exist; and contrariwise we must take it for granted that there is no such thing as history which is merely 'subjective', or, in other words, that whatever is 'created' by the historian is not in a proper sense history at all.

For that history as a whole has been so 'made', that in it we have nothing but a series of projections of present consciousness in the form of a story of past events, from time to time gathered up or abolished in a larger and more inclusive projection—this has, so far as I know, been upheld by no sober-minded man, nor could be: it is only the exceptional writings of particular periods of which such an account can be given, and scarcely even then without any modification.

But, be this as it may be, we refuse the name of history to such a production, and we assume that though history (*Geschichte*) may exist, where the writing of history (*ιστορία*) does not exist, yet, where there is no real past, there also there is properly speaking no historian, nor any writing of history.

In what follows we have nothing to do with history as it is not for the historian: history presupposes, in its title of 'critical', the presence alike of the so-called 'objective' and the so-called 'subjective' elements; and it is only as involving both that we intend in future to use or to discuss the word.

In this sense (to touch at length on our proper inquiry) history stands not only for that which has been, but also for that which is; not only for the past in fact, but also for the present in record; and it implies in itself the union of these two elements: it implies, on the one hand, that what once lived in its own right lives now only as the object of knowledge, and on the other hand that the knowledge which now is possesses no title to existence save in right of that object, and, though itself present, yet draws its entire reality from the perished past.

Stated thus the facts would appear to force us to a grave consideration; but problems are hard to those alone who make them so, and to account for the conjunction of so

diverse attributes has seemed (it is well known), and still seems to the earliest reflection, no difficult task. The explanation is simple. Knowledge is the reception of outward impressions, and it is but natural that the copy should resemble and reproduce the original. And if that which, independent of any act of judgement, was first learned be in like manner simply and honestly written down, surely this copy of a copy is still, undistorted by so transparent a medium, and true to the mould its original has shaped, the living imprint and the faithful though uncoloured likeness of the full reality?

Such is the view natural to the uncritical mind, and according to this history has no presuppositions, and indeed can have none: her province is to recall, and not to construct; she wishes to take the truth as it is, not to make it what it should be; and she demands from the historian the surrender of his judgement to the decree of the ages, not the projection of his desires and fancies into a region for ever passed from the limit of creation, dead to the action and the storm of life, whose tranquil expanse no breath of thought can ruffle, and where the charm is broken when the mirror is moved.

The theory is simple, and it may be pleasing, but it is no more than a theory; and could we, as we cannot, be blind to the difficulties which beset it from within, yet it is doomed to perish, for in its own practical application it exposes its own falsity and reveals its own illusion.

We ask for history, and that means that we ask for the simple record of unadulterated facts; we look, and nowhere do we find the object of our search, but in its stead we see the divergent accounts of a host of jarring witnesses, a chaos of disjointed and discrepant narrations, and yet, while all of these can by no possibility be received as true, at the same time not one of them can be rejected as false.

But the consciousness, for which testimony is the reproduction of a passive print, is at this point not resourceless. 'The pure rays of truth', we are told, 'are discoloured by

the various media through which they pass, and it is the task of the historian to correct the refraction of one medium by that of another, and in this manner to arrive at the bare and uncoloured reality.' But the historian, if such be his mission, is not and cannot be merely receptive, or barely reproductive. It is true that he may not actually add any new material of his own, and yet his action, in so far as he realizes that which never as such has been given him, implies a preconception, and denotes in a sense a foregone conclusion. The straightening of the crooked rests on the knowledge of the straight, and the exercise of criticism requires a canon.

This is not the only difficulty which historical writing in its practice brings to the theory of passivity. There remains on the contrary another of equal weight. When the records of a bygone age have been all collected, and, so far as possible, brought into harmony, yet at this point the task of history does not cease. Writer after writer in rapid succession takes up the never-exhausted theme, and, where no new fact is left to discover, there still remains the ceaseless endeavour more and more thoroughly to apprehend the old material, the passion of the mind to be at home in its object, the longing to think the thing as it is in itself, and as all men have failed to think it before. With every fresh standing-ground gained by the growth of experience, with every rise of the spirit to a fuller life, comes another view of the far-lying past from a higher and a new level, and a fresh and corresponding change in the features of the object recognized. Impotent to deny the existence of these facts, and powerless to explain them, the uncritical consciousness refuses to advance, or advancing loses all hold on reality. It is forced to see in the place of its reproduction an origination, in the place of its witness a writer of fiction, in the place of its fact a theory; and its consistent issue is the barren scepticism which sees in history but a weary labyrinth of truth and tangled falsehood, whose clue is buried and lost in the centuries that lie behind.

An issue consistent, and indeed for a space necessary;

but inevitable to none except those alone who through helplessness and doubt have set their faces towards the truth. To the double-minded seeker, to the man who, though fain to win, has no heart to stake his possessions, in *this* sphere at least there is *no* inevitable conclusion. He justifies his belief in anything by his right to be convinced of nothing; yet for a present pleasure he forgoes his inheritance, and buys his immunity at the cost of slavery.

In view of the futility of such an outcome—not finding a solution in the metaphor of a crude reflection, (and) unable to remain in the doubt of scepticism or to sink to the dogma of despair—it remains to us once again to take up the question abandoned thus by the uncritical mind, and, with patience if not with hope, at least to attempt to exhibit it in a truer form. The heading, 'Presuppositions of Critical History', expresses briefly the doctrine which is the opposite of the uncritical, and anticipates the result that a history without so-called prejudications is a mere delusion, that what does everywhere exist is history founded upon them, and what ought to exist is history with true preconceptions consistently developed throughout the entire field.

But, to take up the problem from the beginning, we must return once more to the uncritical mind, and to its doctrine or its metaphor concerning historical tradition. The ultimate element in the field of history is, as before remarked, presented and necessarily presented to itself by that stage of reflection as a so-called 'fact', the imprint of which is on the part of the witness passively received and preserved: that which brought itself to the observation is subsequently repeated, or written down as so observed, and, in the absence of direct falsehood on the part of the narrator, remains as a simple and indecomposable material. This is the theory of simple reproduction, a view to be met with not solely in the world of common sense: the psychology of the people has made it its own, and consecrated it in the name and with the title of philosophy, and still we are assured with the complacency

of an absolute certitude that in perception the mind is passive, and that the final elements of knowledge are the facts conveyed through the senses.

Into the fullness of the problem raised by sensationalism, into the truth which underlies this 'metaphor now hardened into a dogma', we are not prepared, nor indeed is it necessary, to enter here. We will content ourselves on the general question with the remark, that in the *act* of perception it is no doubt true that the mind is at the same time passive. But to say this is to say one thing, and it is quite and altogether another thing to talk of sensations (in the signification of bare feelings) as though in themselves, and apart from the activity of the mind, they existed as objects of consciousness. That is to *assert* that a mere feeling is sufficient to constitute by itself the minimum required for knowledge and reality; and the proof of this assertion has been, is, and ever will be wanting. It *cannot* exist since the proof or even the assertion is a sheer self-contradiction; and it is a self-contradiction for the following reason. An assertion, and much more so a proof, is intellectual; it is a judgement which implies the exercise of the understanding; and the terms united by the judgement must therefore fall within the sphere of the understanding. They must be objects for the intellect, and so, in a sense more or less entire, relative to the intellect; in a word, intelligible. But the essence of mere sensation was the entire absence of the intellectual, and hence to make one single affirmation with respect to sensation, as sensation, is to treat as relative to the understanding that which is supposed to exclude the understanding; and this is a contradiction.

To pursue with the reason an object which when found is to be irrational, to think the opposite of thought while fixed as opposite, to comprehend the incomprehensible yet without transforming it—such is the task of that which calls itself the 'philosophy of experience'. It is the pursuit of a phantom for ever doomed to fade in our embraces, a mocking shadow beyond the horizon of our grasp, known to us as the unreality of all that we can hold, and



whose existence must perish at the threshold of human possession.

Yet let this be as it may. We are not concerned to ascertain the nature of that which may be regarded as the minimum of fact in general. The object of our inquiry is history, and specially here the ultimate material of the historical field; and we wish to know not what makes any fact, but what makes an historical fact, and what it is without which nothing can rightly be called by that name. We have to inquire in short what it is that in history and for history is required for the existence of its historical matter, and what it is that, be it what it may be in itself, yet can never enter as a member into the narrative of the past.

The facts which exist for critical history are events and recorded events. They are recorded, and that is to say that, although the work of the mind, they now at any rate are no mere feelings, nor generally the private contents of this or that man's consciousness, but are fixed and made outward, permanent, and accessible to the minds of all men. Failing to be thus they have failed to be for history, and history can never be for them. And they are events, and that is to say that each is no simple and uncompounded unit, but contains within itself a motion and a passage, a transition and a connexion between elements—(i.e. they are) relations, the members of which may be distinguished though they cannot be divided. They are recorded events, and that means that, though fleeting in themselves, they are yet made stable; though divisible in time, they are regarded as wholes; and though the offspring of the mind, they are still independent and real.

Such are the characteristics of historical facts considered in themselves. We must regard them now in their relation to the individual witness or recorder. Let us view them as the objects of his consciousness, and ask what are they? and what function of the mind corresponds to them?

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To solve this problem in a short space is scarcely practicable, and to ensure brevity we must be willing here to seem, it may be, contented with assertion.

They cannot be mere feelings. A chaos of sensations has no unity, and hence cannot properly be *called* a succession; nor, even when re-collected as a sequence of feelings in me, can it yet express an outward change in things. In a word, from feeling to the record of an occurrence there is, and there can be, no *natural* passage.

If we recall the characteristics of the narrated event, in the first place it will be clear that they presuppose in the mind both association and recognition of association: association, as that which separates (distinguishes), and at the same time conjoins; and recognition, as that which is aware of the divisible unity as a concrete whole. They require the action of that faculty which separates the subject from the object, and one thing from another thing, while it yet remains the bond of their unity. In a word, they testify to the presence of judgement. A feeling *is* at most; it is neither real nor unreal, true nor false: but every occurrence has or has not taken place, and every judgement professes, although it may fail, to express the actual.

The historical event (in our limited sense of the word history) involves in the first place a judgement. It is 'objective', it is distinguished in itself, and yet it is a whole.

But in the second place it involves much more than what we call a simple judgement. If we take the simplest historical fact, and reflect on the complex nature of the transition it attempts to express, it is clear to us that we are concerned with a number of judgements, the multitude of which wearies our attempts at analysis. And it is not less clear that these many judgements are united, and, as it were, resolved in a single judgement which answers to the whole event.

This one judgement comprehends in itself the many judgements; it must be looked on as their result, or in other words it is a conclusion.

The historical fact then (for us) is a conclusion; and a conclusion, however much it may appear so, is never the

fiction of a random invention. We bring to its assertion the formed world of existing beliefs, and the new matter of a fresh instance. They are grounds for our position, and we know them as such, or at least we may know them. For everything that we say we think we have reasons, our realities are built up of explicit or hidden inferences; in a single word, our facts are inferential, and their actuality depends on the correctness of the reasoning which makes them what they are.

Such is (or seems to be) the constitution of the narrated event; and if its statement is a paradox, it is at least no new one. The evidence which the result lacks here will perhaps not be required by the reader; but in any case, so far as what follows is concerned, he must look for at most a further illustration.

To resume the discussion. In the case of the most straightforward witness deposition to the most ordinary circumstance contains in every instance the recognition of the previously known under fresh features and with new particulars: it involves inferential judgement; inferences of substance and attribute, of cause and effect; and, if the inference is false, the fact is unreal. It is matter of the most ordinary experience that the mediated and complex should appear immediate and simple. We see what we perceive; and the object of our perceptions is qualified by the premises of our knowledge, by our previous experiences. Not only to the child is the novel picture identified with a familiar image, but to each and all of us an uncertain shape is defined on a sudden as a particular object, or the tremor of a feature conveys the emotion of the soul—and all by what seems at the moment a mere communication of the senses.

Yet it is a proverb that in everything a man may be mistaken: and the reflection (when we do reflect) upon our errors brings home to us the conviction that we are wrong only because we judge, and that without this condition of both error and truth existence would be for us impossible.

If we go to the strongest facts, to the best attested events as they are proved in our law courts, we are forced still to admit that there are no facts as to which mistake is impossible; and in every case the mistake rests upon a mistaken inference. But, as we have said, it is the merest illusion to suppose that the entire abstinence from or the total removal of inference is a guarantee for certainty and truth. The best witnesses are those who from long habit have attained to comparative infallibility in their judgements; the testimony even of a child on familiar subjects is of value; but there may be events to which its deposition is worthless, not because it makes inferences, but because it fails to make them, or makes them wrongly, and not because we cannot trust its eyesight, but because we cannot rely upon its reasoning.

It is natural at this point to object that in cross-examination the lawyer has a means for removing the witness's conclusions and arriving at the sensible facts. This to a certain extent is true; a witness can be forced (in certain cases and down to a certain point) to recall and unwind the coil of inference which has made his events what they are. But to confine him to the facts of sense is to reduce him to a condition of impotence. If the man is to speak to anything, in the end the examination is confronted with a judgement, which cannot be called a sensible fact, and which yet defies its analysis; because, though there must be a ground, yet that cannot be recalled, since it never, as part of a conscious reasoning, was explicitly before the consciousness. Here the process must cease, and the existence of the fact rests upon the veracity of the witness in other respects, and the correctness of his judgements on general subjects. But with every precaution the best witnesses may be mistaken; there exists no testimony entirely secured from error; and the possibility of wrong evidence implies the possibility of false reasoning; nor in any case is it explicable except on the assumption that testimony to the simplest circumstance involves and is what it is by reason of an inference.

If it is thus where every safeguard exists, how will it

be where there are none? And if the ultimate legal fact in its very nature is inferential, can we not say with still greater truth that in the realm of history we have and can have no facts whatever which do not hold in their essence and depend for their existence on inferential reasoning?

The correctness of the isolated event as recorded rests upon a theory, and the recorded train of circumstances which makes a narrative is a still wider theory, which must depart yet farther from the fact as imagined to consist in passive sensation, and must imply, together with its greater possibilities of truth and falsehood, the increased existence of active combination. We cannot recall accurately what we have not rightly observed, and rightly to observe is not to receive a series of chaotic impressions, but to grasp the course of events as a connected whole.

It is a fact not to be lost sight of that our memories are certain only because corrigible, and have become trustworthy solely through a process of constant and habitual corrected recollection; the correction being in every case the determination of an order by fixing its elements in their proper relations, and its result a mediated sequence of phenomena.

We have considered the primary historic material, both as single occurrences and as series of events narrated by an original eye-witness, and what we have so far seen is this, that in the field of history it is impossible to free ourselves from reasoning, and that in every case that which is called the fact is in reality a theory. The identification (so far and in this sense) of theory and fact is the end of that stage in our discussion which we have just accomplished, but we are far as yet from our final result.

'Your conclusion,' it will be urged, 'be it never so true, is far from justifying the historian in assumptions or presupposition. Let it be with the facts and the narratives as you will; but they come to the historian as testimony, as the experience of another, and, whatever they may be in themselves, yet for him, as he has them, they are facts:

and in any case all further reasoning concerning them is frivolous.'

The doctrine might be stated with a show of plausibility. Will it bear the test of a practical application to our daily life? I think that to accord our impartial ear indifferently to things probable and improbable, to things true and false, and for no other reason than because we do not see with the eyes and hear with the ears of others, is, if we consider it, a strange and extravagant demand.

I am sure that we might search long and in vain through the lives of those who profess such a creed for any the smallest exemplification of it; and the reflection might occur to us that there are better illustrations of a belief that all things in general are equally credible, than the violent affirmation of the dogma that some things in particular are absolutely certain.

The common experience of reasonable beings bears us out in the assertion that we do not believe without a reason; that the fact asserted by another remains in its position, as an asserted fact, unless we have some cause to take it as true, and to make it a part of our own world: and further that this reason and ground is a reasoning (if not always a rational) judgement, from the possibility or likelihood of the event and the character of the witness. The distinction between our individual experience and testimony as the experience of others is not a distinction which can have the smallest tendency to modify the conclusion we arrived at above, viz. that all our history is matter of inference.

The distinction moreover is to a certain extent illusory. If to say that 'all knowledge comes from experience' is to utter no more than 'an empty tautology', then it must be but a similar tautology to assert that all experience is personal experience. The teaching that it is impossible for a man to transcend his consciousness is not unfamiliar to our ears; and we have learnt the lesson (important or otherwise) that we can only know the things which we can know, and that our world will never be wider than the world which will be ours.

It is a doctrine which often stands for no more than a ground for disbelieving and believing whatever we please; but here, as against the separation of testimony from experience, it has its significance. The experience of others has no meaning for us except so far as it becomes our own; the existence of others is no existence for us if it is not in our world that they live. If we know that other men are, we know it by an inferential judgement: and it is by a similar judgement that the matter of their testimony becomes ours. Both they and it can be nothing to us but parts of our experience; are made parts of it by an inference, and have no validity and no guarantee beyond that inference. To deny this is to state the opposite of a tautology, is to fall into a self-contradiction.

If nothing is ours which is not in our experience, then testimony, if known by us, must be so included: and at this point a familiar illustration may perhaps be excused as tending to throw some light on the preceding statements.

I have met, as I imagine, a friend in the street to-day, and I note it as a fact that A has been seen by me; but this is an inference, the theory on and of certain supposed recalled sensations. I am told on the next day by an eye-witness that A died yesterday; my inferences from the character of the witness, the recognition of a narrative of the death written in the handwriting of A's relatives, lead me to believe this. It is now a fact that A died yesterday; but this fact is again my inference: it is I that have made it a fact for me and, in case there has been a conspiracy to deceive me, it is not fact, but a false judgement of mine. What is now to become of the fact of my meeting with A? That depends on my reasoning, on my general beliefs, on my presuppositions. It may be a fact that I have seen an apparition, or the fact may be now an hallucination; but both one and the other are inferences. It would be possible to proceed much further. I might learn that a real man like A was present at the place and time. A mistake as to persons is now the fact. And it is useless here to urge that the visual sensation at the given time is the ultimate reality; because, in the present

application, we have seen that, let it be never so actual, history can admit no such reality into its sphere; and in the second place there need not have been such visual sensation at all. For, if there were no reason to suppose the presence of any real man, and if an hallucination were hardly possible in my case, the fact might be that my memory was disordered, and that I dated too late a former meeting with A. In short, the fact varies with my judgement, and my judgement must always be based upon and fall within my own experience.

The history then (to proceed), which is for us, is matter of inference, and in the last resort has existence as history, as a record of events, by means of an inference of our own. And this inference furthermore can never start from a background of nothing; it is never a fragmentary isolated act of our mind, but is essentially connected with, and in entire dependence on, the character of our general consciousness. And so the past varies with the present, and can never do otherwise, since it is always the present upon which it rests. This present is presupposed by it, and is its necessary preconception.

History must ever be founded on a presupposition; and the scepticism which saw in the succession of historical writings a series of fictions, where the present was transported into the bygone age, was thus and so far justified: but the insight into the ground of the partial justification will exhibit, I hope, the source of the general mistake.

Paley protested against that which he called a 'prejudication'. We have seen the reason why every history is necessarily based upon prejudication; and experience testifies that, as a matter of fact, there is no single history which is not so based, which does not derive its individual character from the particular standpoint of the author. There is no such thing as a history without a prejudication; the real distinction is between the writer who has his prejudications without knowing what they are, and whose prejudications, it may be, are false, and the writer who consciously orders and creates from the known foundation of that which for him is the truth.



It is when history becomes aware of its presupposition that it first becomes truly critical, and protects itself (so far as is possible) from the caprices of fiction. But what, then, it will be asked, is the presupposition of criticism?

The answer is not far to seek. It is plain from the whole of what has gone before that the ground of criticism is that which is the justification of inference; and an inference, it will be admitted, is justified solely on the assumption of the essential uniformity of nature and the course of events.

Critical history assumes that its world is one, and that in that world it exists, and has but to demonstrate the existence of itself. Its demand is that the judgement which we found to be implicit in every historical fact become explicit, and that the whole sequence be consistently and rationally mediated. As intelligence, criticism seeks the object which already is in itself intelligible, and it realizes itself, if at all, in the form and the character which belongs to itself alone. In a word, the universality of law, and what loosely may be termed causal connexion, is the condition which makes history possible, and which, though not for her to prove, she must none the less presuppose as a principle and demonstrate as a result worked out in the whole field of her activity.

To this extent the characteristics of history are the characteristics of (natural) science, for both carry into the particulars an anticipation which the particulars have already realized in implication: and the reason of this is that for both the fact can exist so far only as already possessed of attributes conferred on it by virtue of the principle, and can oppose the principle by no means but its own self-annihilation.

'Science', we may be told in answer, 'is founded on experiment and not on a presupposition.' 'The fact of the existence of scientific experiment proves', we must return, 'the existence of an absolute presupposition, which it can be said to found, only because upon that itself is already founded.' We base our action on that which our

action itself supports and testifies to. Unless upon the assumption of the exclusion of all interference and chance, no one could say that an experiment was of the smallest value. The man of science cannot prove his assumption beforehand; he knows that as a fact his science exists, and that there are certain conditions necessary to its existence, and he troubles himself little (if at all) with the possibility of the falsehood of his assumption.

Can science testify to a breach of the law which forms its presupposition? This would amount to a contradiction in terms; it would be an observation based upon a rule to prove the non-existence of the rule; it would be a deductive reasoning in which the conclusion would be a negative instance against the leading major premise. No experiment could prove that A (if isolated) was at one time followed by B, at another by C; because the very apparatus of the proof rests upon the absoluteness of the principle—that is to say, the judgements necessary to support the facts of the hostile experiment are self-annihilated in virtue of the experiment's supposed result. Science may retire from the field altogether, but while in its field it has no choice but to remain supreme.

That science should rule its facts seems disputable only so long as we suppose the facts to be something independent. But the truth is, on the other hand, that every scientific observation and experiment involves an inference true or false, and known to be true solely in virtue of the law. The simplest possible datum which is matter of science is no mere atom, but expresses and depends upon connexions in things to which the judgement, if true, must conform. But to know that relations of thoughts express relations in things is impossible except on the formal or virtual assumption of the absolute stability of these latter relations, and the consequent assurance that a false judgement is the result of a false inference in me, and not of a shifting connexion in the world. Science does and must control its facts, and an opposing fact is self-condemned because in every element the principle is already involved.

We find then that, as starting from a conception which it cannot prove, natural science is, in this sense, hypothetical, and exhibits in detail the truth of its hypothesis. Returning to history, we must ask if in this respect it corresponds to science.

That history and science (always in its English limitation to physical science) present no diversity, we are far indeed from suggesting. Unlike most branches of science history can create no experiments; and its subject-matter (we must take it for granted here) is not the same as the matter of science. The difference is wide, but, so far as the point above dwelt on is concerned, both science and history we find to be agreed, namely in this, that a fact which asserts itself as (loosely speaking) without a cause, or without a consequence, is no fact at all, and no better than a self-contradiction, for the reason that, while professing to exist, it abjures the sole ground of actual existence.

But there is an objection which at this point we are certain to encounter. We shall be told that the volitions of man are uncaused, and that hence the doctrine put forth above falls to the ground. Whether, strictly speaking, causation retains a meaning when applied to the will, we need not to inquire. 'Causation' we use throughout in the loose sense which it bears amongst us. And into the question of the relation of freedom to law we are not obliged here to enter. For our present purpose, however, we may thus dispose of the difficulty.

If the freedom of the will is to mean that the actions of man are subject to no law, and in this sense irrational, then the possibility of history, I think, must be allowed to disappear, and the past to become a matter of almost entire uncertainty. For, if we are precluded from counting on human nature, our hold upon tradition is gone, and with it well nigh our only basis for historical judgement.

We find, however, that the contrary is every day assumed as certain, and that where the weightiest interests are at stake, and as long as criminals are executed in many cases by right of what comes to a construction from the

laws of human action, so long will there be at least no practical necessity for the discarding of historical evidence in favour of the doubts, or perhaps the dogmas, of any man.

Thus much at present then seems to be clear—that critical history must have a presupposition, and that this presupposition is the uniformity of law. And we have accomplished here yet another stage of the present inquiry.

But this, we shall be told and rightly told, is much too indefinite. No one now asserts the existence in history of events without a cause or a consequence, and the real point at issue is to determine more narrowly the character of the general principle. 'Uniformity', we shall be told, 'is an empty phrase; similar causes are doubtless followed by similar effects, but in the varied field of history there are causes unlike those which present themselves in our present experience, and which consequently imply the presence of unfamiliar results.' Upon this difficult point it is necessary to attempt to come to a clear understanding.

We have seen that history rests in the last resort upon an inference from our experience, a judgement based upon our own present state of things, upon the world personal in us; and that this is the sole means and justification which we possess for holding and regarding supposed events as real, i.e. as members in and of our universe. When therefore we are presented, as it were from the outside, with so-called 'historical facts', the like of which seem to stand in no relation to all that we have now in heaven or on earth; when we are asked to affirm the existence in past time of events, the effects of causes which confessedly are without analogy in the world in which we live, and which we know—we are at a loss for any other answer but this, that (so far as at present we can see) we are asked to build a house without a foundation, or with our instruments construct a work which can come into no connexion with those instruments. And how can we attempt this without contradicting ourselves?

When further we reflect upon the range and diversity

of our present experience, its width in respect to the different stages of development which it exhibits, and the continual and growing success of its attempt to find a unity in all that variety; then we find it still more impossible to accept, as the real past of our own real world, this riddle of an outer sphere, fallen amongst us down from heaven, and written in a foreign tongue.

Our difficulty is this—we are asked to affirm the existence in history of causes such as we can find nothing analogous to now in our present experience. On the other hand, it is only from our knowledge of what is that we can conclude to that which has been; and, this being so, how can we first infer from the world to the existence of historical evidence within the world, and then, starting from that, proceed out of the world, when all the time we are unable to stand except upon the basis of the world?

As we reflect, the conclusion is borne in on us (perhaps prematurely) that, upon the strength of historical evidence, to assert within the sphere of history the existence of any causes or effects, except on the conviction that there is now for us something analogous to them, is no better than a self-contradiction. And it is this conclusion which after the requisite explanation (and even, as it may appear, with certain modifications) we must in the end undertake to defend.

The statement seems at first sight a paradox, and is open to every kind of external counter-assertion. To these or to some of these we must in the end return, but in the meantime we have to encounter a serious internal difficulty.

Our present point of view is as follows. A critical position towards history in general implies that the mass of historical material is no longer one with ourselves, is not any more carried about in and with us as a part of the substance which we feel to be natural to us, but has, as a possession, been separated from the mind, and is held apart from and over against it as an object which presents a problem for the intelligence. This object, although a possession, has not yet been appropriated; though we have

it, yet we have not made it ours; and though it is intrinsically rational, yet it has not been rationalized. We have seen further that, since all certainty with respect to the past depends ultimately upon present inference, the basis and foundation for the criticism of what has been is necessarily formed by the knowledge of what is.

The difficulty which first meets us at this point presents itself in the following question. 'Is not that which is to be the canon of testimony itself dependent on testimony?', i.e. does not the present knowledge of the historian rest to a considerable extent on what others have told him, and in fact consist of this in no small degree? 'The historian', it may be objected, 'does perhaps as critical divide the world of the past (as in the proper sense not yet known) from the present and known world; but the process is illusory, because this known world, which is the furniture of his mind, and the cosmos which forms the criterion for that which has not yet been systematized, is in itself largely built up of the communicated experience of others. Is it not then a flat contradiction to bring as a canon to criticism that which presupposes uncriticized testimony, and has absorbed it into all the tissues of its organism?'

The objection demands consideration, but its force depends on our supposing that the present experience, which is to be taken as the historical canon, is mere common experience, and it is answered by the reflection that the testimony which the present object involves is, or at least ought to be, no uncriticized material. The experience in short which is to be the foundation of historical criticism must itself be a critical experience.

The object of critical experience can neither be said to be given, nor, so far as the individual critic is concerned, to grow. It is made (or it makes itself); it is a creation, though not from nothing; it is the new-birth of an organism from matter organic but no longer in itself vital.

The contents which in early life are taken into and build up our consciousness, consisting as they do of our individual experiences blended into one substance inextricably with the experiences of others, exist in the un-

critical mind as that which (for itself at least) is a confused and unsystematized world of consciousness. It is to such a world that the critical intelligence awakens, and its awakening is the sundering of its material from itself. It stands (so far as awakened) a self-conscious unity on this side, and regarding its matter as from the outside demands from it the same oneness, that intelligible unity which, as the world of an intelligence, it is to have and virtually has. The new object, which now for the critical mind is the sole and increasing reality, is the reorganization of the old world; it is true only because recreated, and can be recreated only because connected into a rational system. Every part here must live, and live in the life of the whole. The dead matter which was received on authority, and held true because it was so received, must render an account of its claims. It is true, if at all, now no longer as mere testimony, but because it has been examined and satisfactorily mediated with the critical object as at present existing.

This is the condition of its re-vitalization, that it can be subsumed under the present critical world. But what then is this world, which thus in its hands has sentence of life and death? It is the world of critical observation. The ultimate real object, the final reference and last basis, is constituted by that which has been, or can be, personally verified in our own external or internal critical observation. If we are asked for the reason of our beliefs we are sooner or later in the last resort brought back to this; and it is thus our immediate personal (though that need not mean our individual) experience, on which, by many steps or by few, all our certainty depends.

Our answer then to the above objection is this. Certainly our present world contains matter of testimony, but not *as* matter of testimony. What we stand upon is personal observation; and what we have ground to connect with that we will receive because of its connexion with that, and subject to appeal to that; and we will receive nothing else, but from that basis we will order our world.

But yet it is a matter of fact that our world is extended

to fresh cases which (roughly speaking) have nothing analogous to previous phenomena. And, this being so, we are far at present from having established our contention that history is incapable of attesting to events without analogy in the present world. For why should not historical testimony furnish such non-analogous cases? Our answer must depend on the meaning we give to 'historical testimony'. *If* historical testimony implies more than probability, *if* it is equivalent to scientific evidence, then the above question remains unanswerable. There is no reason why such attestation should not be possible. But if we see cause (or choose) to oppose scientific to historical testimony, and to confine the latter to the sphere of the probable, then the question answers itself, so soon as we have discovered what are the conditions of the above extension to the non-analogous. What are these conditions?

That my real world can be widened by the taking in of new facts, and that apart from any special analogy, is indisputable. And in the first place (1) it may be so enlarged by my own observation. Let us take as an example the so-called 'mesmeric' phenomena. These may be said (with accuracy sufficient for the present purpose) to have possibly no analogy to anything in the observer's world hitherto; yet no one could maintain that it was impossible to know and to be certain of these phenomena as real facts. On the other hand no one would assert that these facts could be assured to us by the same amount of observation, as would be enough for phenomena of a class already recognized (wholly or partially) and capable of subsumption under an acknowledged head as a similar or subordinate case. In a word, if we are left to our own observation, and have nothing analogous to support us, we can indeed learn new facts with certainty, but on one condition only, namely that of the most careful examination often repeated.

So far direct observation. Let us pass now to testimony (2) and ask in the second place—Can I learn un-analogous facts mediately with equal certainty, and if so, on what condition?



Let us take once more the 'mesmeric' phenomena. These may have no analogy in our own private experience; and yet we may receive the facts, on testimony, as no less certain than those which we find for ourselves. They are received, and that critically, as attested: but, on the other hand (although not contrary to the conditions which make experience possible, nor yet in contradiction with the object he knows at present), they yet may be without any apparent analogy in the world of the individual critic.

Testimony rests on experience, and testimony goes beyond experience, and, as it would seem, without the support of experience. How is this possible? The answer is that in this, the strongest imaginable case, the testimony must be the strongest imaginable; it must be equal in validity to our own most careful observation. Nothing short of this is enough. The question then arises, 'How is such validity possible, if, as we have seen, testimony must finally rest on an inference from personal knowledge, and if personal knowledge is ultimately based on our own intelligent observation?'

The explanation is this—that by inferences, however complicated yet in the end resting on personal observation, we have so apprehended and possessed ourselves of the consciousness of others, that we are justified in assuming the identity of their standpoint with our own; i.e. we can be assured that the already systematized world, which was brought as a canon by the witnesses to the observation and to the subsumption of the mesmeric phenomena, was practically the same as that which we ourselves should have brought. We thus are certain that the men can see for us, because we know that they are able to think for us. And, having this entire confidence, we run no risk beyond that which our own experience is at all times liable to, viz. the error arising from individual perturbation.

Or, in other words, by an inference from that which I know already I certainly discover that the witness's mind is a universe, a cosmos, like my own and subject to the same laws; and hence, if I can conclude in addition to his integrity and his will to observe and judge, his judgement

is to me precisely the same as my own. He may be right or wrong, but so may I; he is as likely to be right as I am; and I can only tell whether he is right by the same criteria which (apart from fresh observation) tell me that I am right. *If* I am able to apply a negative and positive criticism to his new fact, as I do to my new fact, then his fact is as good as mine. Our objective world is known to be the same, his subjective power of extending the object is known to be equal to mine, and the distinction of our individualities makes no difference to the matter itself.

We have seen that testimony, even without analogy, can be made part of our present critical object; but we have seen also on what condition. Testimony goes beyond individual experience, but not beyond *our* experience; or it takes us beyond our experience if it takes *us* with it. It is not uncriticized; it stands, if at all, on the basis of our world. It has been made subject to the laws and has been connected with and become part of our personal experience, not in its own right *as* testimony, not in the right of the witness *as* witness, but in the right of and on the guarantee of our own intelligence.

The question proposed above, 'Under what conditions is it possible to extend our experience to fresh phenomena, which (roughly speaking) are without analogy in what has been hitherto observed?', has been answered. Such enlargement, apart from our own observation, is possible only through the above-described identification of consciousness. This is the one and the indispensable condition.

The bearing of this result will be seen more clearly when exhibited in its negative form as an answer to the question, 'Under what conditions does testimony necessarily fail to establish a non-analogous case?' In the first place, we must say, wherever we are unable to verify the witness generally; in the second, wherever we cannot satisfy ourselves with respect to his particular procedure.

(1) In the first place, wherever the standpoint of the witness differs (wholly or in relation to the particular class of facts in question) from our own, or wherever its agreement is not known to us, there the testimony cannot stand

without analogy from our own experience. For, however possible any matter may be, yet we cannot on testimony receive it as real, unless we have ground to connect it with the real. Analogy is such a ground, but, failing analogy, there is nothing left but the inference to a strength of testimony which can exist only on the assumption of the identification of our own with another's consciousness (in general, or in relation to one particular division of the world); and this assumption, in the case supposed at present, we have no right to make.

To repeat—wherever the so-called 'fact' is made by subsumption under a view of the world different from ours, wherever we fail to make out that the judgement rested (consciously or unconsciously) on an ordered system identical with our own, there the 'fact' cannot be affirmed except on analogy; for, since the narrative is based on beliefs different from ours, the facts are affected by the beliefs, or, for anything we know, they may be so; we have no security that they are not affected. And the application of the above is, that any narrative of 'facts' which involves judgements proceeding from a religious consciousness or a view of the world which, as a whole or in respect of the part in question, differs from ours, cannot have such force as to assure us of any event un-analogous to present experience.

(2) In the second place, even where we are able to be sure that the witness regarded his facts from a point of view identical with our own, yet, taking this for granted, wherever we are not able to assume the witness's integrity, and wherever we have not firm grounds for believing that the amount of careful and intelligent observation was brought to the case which we ourselves should have considered necessary—there the identification of consciousness is still incomplete; the testimony is not equal to our own verification, and the matter of it must stand, if at all, on analogy, and apart from analogy cannot be received.

We have asked the question, 'Can our knowledge be extended by ourselves to embrace a fresh world of phenomena?'

And we have answered that question in the affirmative. We have stated the means, our own stringent observation. We have inquired again, 'Can testimony similarly enlarge our experience, where analogy fails?' And we have answered, 'Yes, where identification of consciousness is possible; but, where it is not possible, Never.' 'Never' for this reason, that to be critical we must stand on our own experience, that an extended experience is ours when we make it, and that the matter of testimony, where it does not become ours in such a manner as to be valid of itself and directly, must be valid and ours indirectly by an inference from the basis of our present knowledge. Such conclusion is an analogy, and by a mere analogical argument you cannot conclude to a non-analogous fact.

To this latter statement we shall have to return; but at present we have ended all that we have to say on testimony in general. We must pass to historical evidence in particular. We asserted above provisionally that in no case could historical testimony establish the non-analogous; that, for example, it could not attest the existence of 'mesmeric' phenomena. There seems at first sight no ground in the foregoing for such a contention. We must attempt, however, to justify it.

But such justification will be possible only at the cost of a considerable amount of assumption. What historical testimony can prove, and cannot prove, must depend in the end upon what we mean by 'historical testimony'. The answer to this question we must take to no small degree for granted.

What is historical evidence? It seems, till we try it, so easy to say; but the effort assures us of the presence of difficulty.

When we speak of historical evidence, and when we emphasize the 'historical', the accent is due to the contrast which, either disguisedly or openly, exists in our mind between 'scientific' and 'merely historical'. In general we imagine a distinction between the two sorts of testimony, but to put that difference into words is in any case arduous;

and to do so without the assumption of some point which is matter of controversy is, in the present state of opinion, I believe, impossible.

It is easy to bring forward a partial answer. We may say, if we will, that history is the testimony of the past to the past, while science is that of the present to the present, of the present in the sense of what *is* unchangeably: and this answer, if it is not the truth, must be said at any rate to have its truth. But for present purposes in its simple form it is altogether insufficient.

For in a certain sense we know *nothing* but the past. Scientific testimony, scientific observations are, like all things human, events in time, and while we grasp them as present they are gone. This is no psychological refinement: there is no one too sensible or too careless to apprehend at least that the present of to-day is the past of to-morrow, this week of next week, the last century of this century.

In a certain sense again we know nothing but the present. That the object of knowledge must be present is a truism; and historical evidence, to be valid for us, must be here and now before us.

And in practice the differences of time are of no more account than the differences in space. That a scientific experiment was made this year or last year may be in itself as utterly indifferent as the fact that it was made in England or America; the intervals are nothing to us. Historical testimony again may be what is called contemporary with ourselves; but in itself such a consideration does not necessarily lead us to belief or to disbelief. The orthodox Catholic of our day gets no hearing for his stories except from Catholics; and the tales of the uneducated concerning witchcraft or spectres do not find more favour from the fact that they belong to the present generation.

The distinction of past and present, as we see, will not help us from our puzzle; and our confusion is by no means lessened when we reflect that we cannot name one single event which, in certain quarters, would not be considered

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an object for science—'science' to be construed in the narrow meaning of physical science, and the event to be taken in the unlimited extent of its entire signification. On the other hand, the reflection meets us that, in the opinion of many, there is not one single 'scientific' fact which, as an event, can be excluded from history, if we allow ourselves the fullest use of the word.

In view of such complications, when we find that the objects attested to by history and science are apparently indistinguishable, and that the date of the attesters matters nothing in itself, we are at a loss to perceive any longer that distinction in kind we imagined to exist.

If further we confine this distinction to degree, and say history with its evidence is probable, while certainty belongs to the essence of science, we perhaps shall have stated what is altogether true, and in words at least shall have established our contention. For if history as a whole be probable, and if every probable detail be admitted to rest on an argument from analogy, then that the matter of historical testimony stands, if at all, on an analogical argument is an obvious conclusion. But it is in words alone that the assertion is made good, while the difference to be made manifest is simply obscured. We shall be found merely to have asserted that everything which is certain is matter of science, and that everything not provable is matter of history.

To identify the matter of science and history is not only in itself a serious assumption where the meaning of science is *natural* science; but it also for our purpose is practically useless. It is useless, because the terms 'scientific' and 'historical' will not help us in the least towards a result, but in this sense will merely express the result itself. They will be empty synonyms for 'certain' or 'probable'.

It is not worth while to linger over efforts at definition like the above. The attempts are hopeless. To maintain the distinction at all the sphere of history must be limited; and history can be limited only in the face of counter-propositions. To define historical testimony we must divide the whole which some think indivisible, and to do

this by proof involves an engagement along the whole front of the position.

For our purpose here there is nothing practicable except to assume what we think is necessary, and to remember that it remains an assumption throughout.

We take historical testimony in the first place (1) to be *in* history, i.e. we confine it within the field of *human tradition*. Geological, geographical evidence, evidence from excavations, and evidence from language, we refuse to consider as properly historical. The reason is this, that they do not essentially lie within the period of human records; and history-writing is to count for us here as the limit of critical history.

Historical testimony in the second place (2) is *to* history. Astronomical or meteorological records, the whole account kept of natural events, are, as we understand it, not part of history. History for us too is a record of events, but the record of a single field, the tradition and the tale of the deeds and sufferings of *men*.

The theory which science may construct of the development of our system or of the planet on which we live; the story of the origin of animal life and the growth of its varied species, the account of the generation of humanity itself with its early stages and slow gradations—these we may accept (as we all do and must accept them) in some sense or other; but they one and all for our present inquiry must fall beyond the historical limit. Such evidence is not historical evidence.

We must go still farther. The records of the science of the day of its present human phenomena; the observations and experiments recorded by the physiologist or doctor, and even the narrations of empirical psychology—these in addition we refuse (so far as scientific) to consider under the head of historical testimony. Historical *material* they may be. (Is there anything human which may not be?) There is no human record which is not historical material, and therefore in a sense historical testimony also. It is not, however, the facts as attested which in such a case fall within the field of history. It is not the facts which are

historical, but only the fact of their attestation, which latter belongs to a different world. To express the same thing more simply, scientific evidence is a human phenomenon which in itself is not scientific.

What is the ground of our refusal above? The following:—not only must historical testimony be in history and to history, but it also (3) must have its origin in an historical interest.

The interest of science is the discovery of the laws of what *is*, neither past nor present nor future events, nor events at all, but only the abiding. The interest of history is in the recalling of a course of events which *are not*, which neither exist nor will exist, but which *have* existed. The object of the one is 'the permanent amid change', the object of the other 'the changes of the permanent'; facts to the one are illustrations, to the other are embodiments; the individuals of the one are limited to be abstracted, of the other are incorporated to be realized.

In more simple language, the interest at the basis of scientific testimony is to use the particular case just so far as to get the universal *out of it*; the concretion of life is worth having solely for the sake of the abstract relations it contains. But the interest which gives birth to historical testimony is a human interest, an interest in the particular realization. Our common nature, which is personal in us all, feels in each one of us 'that nothing human is alien to ourselves'. Our interest in the past is our feeling of oneness with it, is our interest in our own progression; and because this human nature to exist must be individual, the object of historical record is the world of human individuality, and the course of its development in time. For scientific testimony the man is a mere example, for historical never: he is a new incarnation of the same felt substance, the manifest individualization, it may be, at highest, of a stage in progress (but on this point we wish to express no opinion). For the universal *as such* the historical witness cares not at all; at most it concerns him to see it embodied in a single person or the spirit of a nation.



It is possible, we admit, where matters are so complex and the tendencies of the mind so mix and meet, that the testimony of science may wander for the time to a merely historical field and interest; it is possible again that a record made for purposes of science may cover in addition the ground of history. In the first case the testimony is merely historical and not scientific; in the second case the testimony is both. It is primarily scientific and incidentally historical; it is more than historical, and in considering historical testimony we must be allowed to exclude it from our conclusion.

But in the vast majority of cases the three conditions we have just explained will be found sufficient to distinguish the testimony of history and of science. Doubtful cases will remain and must remain. The story of the plague at Athens might well have been told either from the point of view of history or from that of science; as it stands perhaps it belongs to both. The field of 'mesmeric' and similar phenomena, in the sphere between physiology and psychology, would afford a variety of evidence, passing by slow degrees from the scientific to the historical, and thence to a region which holds of neither science nor history. But these cases do not trouble our general distinction. Our rule must be this: we must first discover, as we can, whether the testimony is to be called historical or not; in the second place we must ask whether, being historical it is at the same time more, whether it is also scientific. This second class which is also scientific (i.e. such evidence as would be allowed to constitute the proof or part of the proof of a scientific generalization) we do not call simple historical testimony, and wherever it exists the following conclusions have no application.

We have narrowed 'historical testimony' to a limited field; and we have been forced to renounce the smallest attempt to justify our procedure. Arbitrary as that may appear it is not so altogether; and the result will I think accord with the beliefs of the majority.

Having attempted in some measure to define our terms

we can take up the question once more, 'Is historical testimony capable of extension to the non-analogous?'

We can now put that question in its other form, 'Is historical evidence probability or proof?' Into this general distinction it is impossible here to enter. It must be taken for granted, and wherever it is not allowed, wherever fact and probability are identified, there we admit the conclusions of this essay are without validity.

Is the matter of history probable or certain? We believe it to be probable; but this does not mean that about all its contents there is practically a doubt. It means that, be there never so many converging lines of probable reasoning, yet these never transcend the region of practical certainty. The result is never theoretically proved.

An historical 'proof' may be conclusive, in so far that we cannot doubt; a legal 'proof' may in many cases leave room for no possible hesitation; but neither the one nor the other is for us a scientific demonstration.

The matter of historical testimony is, we believe, not a certainty but a probability; the grounds of this assertion will be given below. But let us in the first place (1) suppose that it is admitted to be probable; then the conclusion will follow that it cannot extend to events without analogy in the sphere of present certainty.

Why is this? It is because in history we have a probable conclusion, which at the same time is required to stand as certain; an hypothesis which cannot be scientifically verified, but which nevertheless is to be taken as a fact; and the only means, the sole justification of such a result is in the accordance of the conclusion of the hypothesis with the known world. And that is the present world, the verifiable world, the world of to-day, or (in another application of the term) the world of science.

The propositions of science cannot be probable; the scientifically probable is not yet scientific doctrine. The theories of historical fact again are not probable in the sense that they are simply the statement of open questions. They are results; and where no result is possible, no history exists. But, resting on mere probable evidence,

to come to a result beyond the limit of analogy—when we know in the present world no similar case, nor any tendency which makes in the direction—this is the procedure, we think, of no reasonable person.

And it should not be forgotten that, if the interest of history is not the enlargement of the territory of science, but rather the exhibition of the oneness of humanity in all its stages and under all its varieties; if it is ourselves that we seek in the perished (and is there anything else which we can seek?); if the object of our endeavour is to breathe the life of the present into the death of the past, and re-collect into this pantheon of the mind the temporal existences which once seemed mortal;—then, where we encounter an alien element which we cannot recognize as akin to ourselves, that interest fails, the hope and the purpose which inspired us dies, and the endeavour is thwarted. The remembrance of our childhood and our youth is the sweetest of pleasures, for it gives us the feeling of ourselves, as the self of ourself and yet as another; and the failure to recognize or the impossibility of interest in our earlier life is, to those whom it has befallen, the bitterest pain of the most cruel estrangement.

But to resume:—If historical conclusions are probable, they are subject to analogy.<sup>1</sup> Next we must ask if they ever are more than probable.

This question (2) we answer in the negative. If more than probable they must needs be scientific; they would be equal to the results of our critical observation, and for this, as we have seen, is required both identification of standpoint and assurance of sufficient integrity and carefulness.

To these the nature of historical testimony presents insurmountable obstacles.

In the first place (A) we must remember that historical testimony not only is *to* history, but is also *in* history. This addition prevents the identification of our minds with the minds of the witnesses. For history (i) (we assume it) is progressive, is a progress not only in the

<sup>1</sup> See on this point Appendix, Note C.

sense of that which increases in quantity, but in the sense of that which develops or evolves itself, is essentially the same in stages of growth which are diverse in quality, which differ from each other even more than the blossom from the bud, and the fruit from the blossom.

If the bud were self-conscious it would know of itself, but not in the way that the blossom knows it, still less as the fruit knows it; and as failing of the truth its knowledge must be said to be false.<sup>1</sup>

Still more is it so with history. In that ceaseless process which differentiates itself only as a means to integration, and which integrates itself only with the result of a fuller differentiation, the consciousness of the earlier stage of humanity is never the consciousness of a later development. The knowledge it has of itself is partial and false when compared with the epoch of an intenser realization. And when we reflect that for this highest development it is that history exists, we see that it is a hope doomed only to disappointment, when the present expects in the mind of the past to find the views and beliefs of the present.

If the stages of evolution were essentially diverse, the possibility of history is inconceivable; and if history were a manifestation of human phenomena where all but the accidental was simply the same, the interest it excites would in no respect be higher than the pleasure we take in an ordinary novel.

To proceed:—Not only is man's nature progressive, but (ii) history is concerned, so to speak, with the most human part of humanity, and hence the most fully progressive. The conscious deeds and sufferings, the instinctive productions, and unconscious destinies of men and of nations live most with the special and characteristic life of an individual epoch; and it is the time and the children of the particular time which alone are the past for which history cares.

And not only is the matter of history in progress, not only again does history select that element which progress affects the most, but thirdly (iii) within that sphere its

<sup>1</sup> This illustration is borrowed.

interest leads it to the most distinctive embodiment of the passing stage; not to those social relations which possess a limited permanence, but to the striking, the temporal, in a word the individual.

And as is the interest so is the subject interested. The historical witness is also the son of his time, and, in relation to that which bears most the stamp of the era, his mind is the reflection of the age in a mirror which shares its nature. It is thus that, in his character of recorder, his point of view when he relates phenomena dissimilar to ours will also itself not fail to be dissimilar.

For science it is true the observations of the one age are valid for the conclusions of another; and that, it may be added, where no present analogy is perhaps in existence. The facts of 'mesmerism' could be proved, we doubt not, by simple scientific testimony; and astronomical observations are accepted as facts, and doubtless would be so no less, in case they were supported by no analogy. The reason of this is, of course, that we are able so to reconstruct the observers and the conditions of their observations, as to possess ourselves entirely of their faculties, and use them as our own. And the possibility of this consists in the fact that science abstracts. It takes account not of all phenomena, but in each of its divisions of a separate and limited province, and it uses, so to speak, not the whole but a part alone of the observer's consciousness.

The object of science does not transform itself in a ceaseless progress, and the subject of science can separate itself from the concrete development of the historical mind, and can remain practically identical while coexisting with standpoints generally diverse. But this with history is impossible.

Not only do we fail to possess ourselves of the historical witness in such manner as to secure scientific proof, but secondly (B), even were this the case, to reconstruct the particular observation is well nigh impossible.

For the original fact of history is (i) an event which perishes as it arises. It dies and it can never be recalled.

It cannot repeat itself, and we are powerless to repeat it. And in addition (ii) we cannot prepare for it.

We may be ignorant of its approach; and if we were aware of that, yet to post ourselves in the fitting locality may be out of our power; or, given our presence at the time and place, still the fact is too complex for a certain observation. To fix you must isolate; and how can you isolate here?

And, given your power to isolate and to fix, yet too often you know not the important point. The moment which decides the movement of a complication reveals itself as such when the tendency is established; and then from our knowledge of the present too late we deplore our ignorance in the past.

And further there remains (iii) yet another consideration, which weakens still further (as compared with juridical) well nigh the whole of historical testimony. With the possible exception of contemporary evidence the historian is unable to cross-examine his witnesses. He can, by a critical analysis of the deposition, as a whole in relation to its parts, and of the relations which the parts bear to one another, and further by a comparison with other statements, to a certain extent make good this defect. But his procedure remains in the end but a wretched substitute, and a permanent source of weakness.

Such are the obstacles in the way of a scientific historical proof. The result of their consideration is this—that, even in case the historian should succeed in exhibiting identity of standpoint, yet the further reconstruction will never be complete enough to take him beyond a mere probability; and hence, since a probable conclusion must rest on analogy, that therefore the non-analogous is excluded for ever from the sphere of historical testimony.

This result we believe to be simply the theoretical expression of the best historical practice; and when there is one single supposed event in tradition, to which present experience can supply no analogy, which yet remains unchallenged by criticism, then and not till then will it be necessary to ask how such a condition of things can

exist, and to attempt to reconcile with it the doctrine we have now put forward and endeavoured to defend.

This doctrine is at all events the reverse of sceptical. The present experience, which is open to our research, is so wide in its extent, is so infinitely rich in its manifold details, that to expect an event in the past to which nothing analogous now corresponds may fairly be considered a mere extravagance. And taking again historical testimony, as we have it now, there will be few, I think, who on reflection will find the above conclusions either forced on the facts or strained beyond them; or whose point of view will render impossible their general adoption.

But it will be urged that existing historical witnesses are no fair sample of historical testimony, that what may be or is does not mean what ought to be, and that first the conclusion has been fixed, and then a term has been narrowed to suit it. This in any case has not been done; but it is perfectly true that, if historical testimony be used in a more extensive sense, the above conclusion fails to apply.

History perhaps is a science to generalize what is, to discover the laws of phenomena. If it is this, then historical evidence not only may be but must be scientific; and nothing but scientific testimony has a right to be called historical. But in a world where all that we find in existence is so hard to understand, it seems idle to reflect on what merely is to be; and to speculate on a mere discounted possibility (or perhaps impossibility) is never, I think, a legitimate proceeding.

Let us suppose, though, that history is really to be a science, and one thing is clear from the first, that the mass of existing historical testimony is non-scientific, and well nigh (if not altogether) devoid of the smallest value. The necessary scientific evidence must be made.

'It is being made' (we shall be told of course) 'and that by statistics.' But to see the relations which the elements of particular societies bear to one another, or even to generalize laws, which apparently in all societies are likely to be more or less correct, is one thing. It is one thing to

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discover permanent relations in the stationary; and if history were stationary (if we could say of it that it was and is to eternity) in that case the science of history would be a far simpler expectation. But it is another, an altogether and an utterly different, undertaking to find the eternal laws which 'explain' the changes of an unending evolution, which is for us only so far as it has made itself, and each stage of which is the qualitative new-birth of an organic, and more than an organic, unity, which resumes its lower developments in a fresh integration, and informs its elements with its own distinctive nature. If the 'explanation' of the development of a man's individuality in every case presupposes the result it arrives at, and 'explains' in the end nothing that is individual—then it must be a more futile attempt for us who have not the result before us, mere children who have seen and known no more than the childhood of humanity, to 'explain' from that the future of its life, and to reach the laws which will evolve its character, through successive individualizations, from youth to manhood and from manhood to age. In this way to seize the 'red strand of necessity' in progress is surely impossible, and 'science of tendencies' is an amiable phrase, which sounds not much better than 'science of intentions'.

And if this science of progress is to be possible in itself, yet, where everything turns on recording, as they arise, the essential facts, there presents itself at once a new impediment. The essential facts are the determining element of movement, and the means to a fresh end; but to apprehend the means implies the knowledge of the end, to know the essential movement involves the knowledge of the terminus. But, confined as we are to a limited stage, with the heights above us hidden from our eyes (what we *are*, that we know), there remains to us nothing but either to secure the whole of the events, and this is impossible; or to run in imminent danger of recording those facts which are not essential, and hence are useless for the science of progress. It is a commonplace that the past has recorded too much that we could well spare, and



too little of that we would most gladly know. Will it not be so always? What we think the important phenomena of 1870 and 1871 may perhaps have eluded our accurate observation, and in 1971 may with other things be a matter of controversy, while as for the interest of the historian of 1971, and the facts which bear most in his mind on progress, of these perhaps we have simply no notion.

So much in passing—but if after all there can really exist historical testimony which is more than probable, it must fall outside of and destroy our conclusion; and of course can assure us of non-analogous facts, since it is of such strength as to be valid evidence for a law of science.

We have ended the first and by far the largest division of our subject. We have found the principle of critical history, and have now to see its application to existing testimony. But let us briefly resume our present result.

We have seen so far that history is matter of inference; that every inference rests on a presupposition; and that this presupposition is formed by present experience. We have further shown that, although this experience is not always personal in the sense of that which we can immediately verify for ourselves, it yet is personal in the sense that upon the observation and judgement of our own mind it ultimately depends. We have shown that it is present, not in the sense of connexion with this or that moment, but in the sense of belonging to no moment in particular. We have shown that this character belongs alone to scientific testimony, that the material of history must hence be subject to analogy; and this distinction we have endeavoured to strengthen and defend.

Criticism is now left fronting the material, to recreate which it possesses and feels both the mission and the strength. And this may be considered an artificial position, in so far as the individual critic never does actually separate himself from the whole of his historical knowledge, but invariably brings with him to the work a

portion of the traditional object, already rationalized and made part of his present and critical world. Nor is this apparent anticipation of his result unjustified in the individual, if that which he brings as a canon to criticism has been itself already confronted with criticism and rationalized by virtue of it—i.e. has been concluded to be actual fact from a critical standpoint which is essentially the same as the critic's own. For the true world is continually growing, and when part of history has been made real it at once becomes a means for the realization of the remainder. Artificial then as the complete separation of criticism from its material appears and moreover is, when we regard the individual alone, yet it is far from being so as soon as we consider the process of criticism in itself.

History, in the character of historical criticism, views its contents as lying outside itself, and its task is once more to contain them within itself. But to this the very nature of the contents presents an obstacle. The contents are records, which in a twofold manner claim to be received as real facts; first as the record of some particular age and author, and secondly in the character of recorded events. If now the whole mass were found to be completely mediated, subject to the conditions and according to the analogy of present experience; if namely the events narrated were consistent, were possible, and followed in a sequence, of which the causes and the results were in some measure known to us; and if further the dates and the general credibility of the writers were established by a satisfactory train of inference;—in that case criticism would have no task before it, save the work of verifying and reaffirming under its own guarantee the unchanged material in its original shape.

But how far, how entirely such a supposed state of things is removed from reality, needs not to be remarked. It does not exist, and the mode in which the matter of history is produced does not admit of its possible existence. It would indeed be strange if every record were authentic and trustworthy, if the judgements of a succession of witnesses scattered along the development of human pro-

gress were all secured from error, and without alteration could be harmonized into one connected whole. No one at the present time would dare to say that such is the case; and if such is not the case, then criticism, if it is to be criticism, must necessarily be to a certain extent negative.

So much is generally seen, but there is something more which cannot be said to be seen and generally admitted, namely this—that a negative criterion, if it exist at all, must be from its nature an absolute criterion, or be a self-contradiction. To the consciousness which never has risen to the critical point of view ‘facts are stubborn things’, and the most stubborn of all are those which the mind feels it has no share in, and which come to it with the weight of external authority. We have seen, however, what these facts are made of, and, at the point we have reached, it needs no lengthy reflection to justify the negative character of criticism.

Criticism from its very essence cannot be simply affirmative. The object which is to be criticized has ceased to be the real object, since for criticism it is the critical and that alone which is the real, and the uncritical object is consequently negated in its old and not yet reaffirmed in its new character. Criticism, if it be criticism, must in the beginning and provisionally suspect the reality of everything before it; and if there are some matters which it cannot reaffirm without falsifying itself, these matters have themselves to thank. If indeed it is so that this is their lot, that they cannot withdraw from criticism because in their very substance is involved and admitted that principle which in criticism becomes conscious of itself, and if yet to submit to criticism be for them to be transmuted or to be destroyed—this is no charge to lay against the arbitrariness of the critic. It is the contradiction implicit in the facts which to their own destruction has become explicit, and if they are denied it is only because they deny themselves.

If for history the fact means that which is real, and if the real means that which criticism has affirmed, it should

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not be forgotten that it is mere nonsense to talk of anything as 'an historical fact' unless criticism has been able to guarantee it as such.

There may be professed historical events, which in themselves, since they are represented without historical antecedent or sequent, contradict the conception of an historical fact (are the opposite of that which an event must be in order to exist for history) and, as they stand, history cannot even discuss their possibility.

There may be events which, though in themselves coming under the conditions of history, can yet be supported by no analogy from present experience, and, despite their testimony, they must wait for farther experience.<sup>1</sup> There may be events which, though both possible and analogous, are mediated with the real by no sufficient connexion, and until connected they are not yet rationalized. And lastly there are narrated facts which criticism can reaffirm as certain or probable. We must ask ourselves in what this process consists.

The historical material, as has been before stated, is twofold and presents to criticism two sides, on the one side the author, on the other the events recorded. Criticism must attempt on the one side to identify its consciousness, so far as possible, with that of the writer, by inference to establish his power and his will to narrate faithfully; on the other to find in the events recorded laws analogous to those which have been observed in present experience and in history so far as already rationalized. If the task be fully accomplished the facts are historically certain, if partially they are considered probable; but in each case they retain their original shape.

But these events thus reasserted by criticism form no continuous whole, the series presents gaps which a positive process is necessary to fill, and the process is an inferential re-creation according to law from a basis of present experience or of the historical certainty already attained. It is a sufficient answer to any difficulties which may be raised as to the construction of a past order to

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note D.

point to the procedure of our police courts, where, in addition to the reconstruction of the witnesses by cross-examination, the sequence of events is reached by an active combination from present data. The inadequacy, however, of the historical material both in respect of quantity and quality makes the completion in this manner of the series of events an impossibility, and the persistent attempts to join the open links by the creation of causes and motives can lead to nothing but an overstrained Pragmatism, which fills the past with those fancies and opinions which only belong to the individual consciousness of the writer.

Thus far criticism has given an account of that portion only of its material which has been able to be realized because found to be already rational. There is still a remainder which has not been rationalized, which in other language, because incapable of forming in its own shape a part of the true object, must be considered as simply subjective.

Error is here presupposed, and the task of criticism is, by the removal of error, where possible to restore the truth. The process, as before, admits of a twofold method, namely the reconstruction of the supposed historical fact either from its inward or outward side, by inference on the one side from the mental character of the witness or on the other side from the course of events; and where the operation is successful, the fact once more takes its place in the world of reality, still as an outward event, but new-begotten and transformed.

It may be no unwarrantable digression to call attention once more to the view which in different forms we have so often encountered, according to which here the removal of mistake by criticism has for its result the 'original fact'. But in the present case the 'original fact' is primarily for history a fallacious inference, and if by the 'original fact' be meant again that which the fact should have been, still this for history is an inference, the theory of a theory, whose result is a double-distilled theory.

There is still an unrationalized material remaining for

history as a problem, alleged outward events which can be taken into the real series neither as unchanged nor yet as transmuted into other outward events. But even in this case criticism is not powerless; for, although the mistaken outward fact cannot be resolved into the real outward fact, we may none the less deal with the mistake itself, and the exhibition of those conditions which caused the wrong assertion of an outward fact is for criticism the satisfactory mediation of the alleged fact as a link in the historical sequence: the outward has now an existence, real indeed but inward, and assured to us only so far as inward.

These are the processes of criticism by which it makes its own the alienated material of tradition, whether in the form of outward occurrences or in that of inward events; but there must ever remain elements which it cannot reappropriate, and in many cases the testimony must be taken simply as testimony, the existence of which is historical, but the real fact or, in other words, the explanation of which cannot be given because we do not possess the data for its reconstruction.

The fact as attested may be possible, and in this case we lack the inference necessary to make it, as attested, part of history; or the attested fact may be historically impossible, and in this case we know that, as attested, it can never be part of history.

In neither of these cases can the testimony be explained as arising from the real existence of the attested. But it will be objected that we are bound to account for the testimony otherwise, or else accept the supposed fact. 'Testimony is a phenomenon,' says Paley, 'and the truth of the fact solves the phenomenon.' 'Testimony is a phenomenon'; that is indisputable, and as testimony it has its place in history. 'The truth of the fact solves the phenomenon'; that is equally certain, and we could wish that we had any means of knowing the solution. 'But', we shall be answered, 'it is the assumption of the existence of the attested fact which is this solution.' That, however, depends entirely upon the nature of the fact alleged. The phenomenon to be solved is an historical phenomenon,

and its solution must be an historical solution, and to propose as this solution a fact which, when taken as historical, contradicts the very notion of history, and dissolves together with history both itself and every other certain event, this is a proposition which may indeed do credit to its author's zeal, but hardly to his prudence.

But if we are unable to accept the averred fact because it is either as yet without guarantee, or because it is an historical impossibility, are we then bound to account otherwise for the phenomenon of the testimony? Can it be urged against us that our theory contains within itself facts which contradict it, and that we must solve the facts or abandon the theory? By no means, for this is to confound that which is negatively with that which is positively irrational. These unrationalized recorded events are in contradiction with criticism only when affirmed by criticism, but now, in the character of objects which history does not yet know, they are nothing positive; they fall as yet without the theory; they are no foreign body taken up within the system, but are as yet an external and unassimilated crudity. The reproach, if such it be, that for history without the known there lies a still unknown, without the real a still unrealized, is a reproach not hard for history to bear, since she bears it in common with the whole of human knowledge.

No! It is no disgrace to be ignorant where the problem is recognized and the effort is made. And it may be that those who in some particular field have made that effort, and made it not in vain, may yet by trial and failure have learnt to regard perhaps one phenomenon, or it may be more,<sup>1</sup> as incapable of resolution. This for the individual

<sup>1</sup> I had in my mind here the two passages in Baur's *Kirchengeschichte* (B. i, §§ 39-40, and again 45) where he has expressed himself in a somewhat unsatisfactory manner. There are two points to be kept clear. (i) That Baur intended to exclude from the field of criticism *any historical event* is, I think, quite out of the question. That which 'lies without the sphere of historical investigation' is, he means to imply, not an event, not a fact for critical history at all: though it may be an object for a higher form of knowledge. Secondly (ii) when in both cases the spiritual process, which to Baur is the sole historical fact, is declared to be impenetrable by analysis,

may be inevitable, but absolutely to assert the insolubility of any one historical element is to give offence to the consciousness of criticism and to strengthen the cause of her enemies. Historically to *account* for a phenomenon may not always be possible; but it behoves us always to attempt to exhibit its historical origin as the result of known historical conditions; and in this sense its *possible* 'explanation' must be considered in every case as beyond a doubt. Every phenomenon has a possible solution, because as historical it must be the result of an historical antecedent; and the cause is a possible object of knowledge, because the result is known already as that which by its very nature is a member in a series of links, the essence of which is to be knowable. Historical events there may be which are destined to remain for us always problems, but problems they remain for us and ever will remain, and

surely in this there is nothing to call for any great amount of surprise. What Baur may very well have meant is that there are results for which no 'genetic development' will account, or give a reason, however much it may 'explain' them; and processes again (as we see, for example, in the case of many works of art) the elements of which defy distinction, because indissolubly fused within particular personalities by a flame, which mixes the substance of the elements with the nature of the vessel that holds them, and which itself is the new-birth of an individual soul. Hence they are not natural growths but creations; and if we like to call them miracles, we may. Sooner that, I conclude Baur would have added, than 'world-historical humbugs'; since the supposed reality of this latter phrase, however much it may (or may not) explain, will certainly account for nothing, and itself cannot be accounted for. It is a standing contradiction, a barbarous sideroxylon. If this is all that Baur had in his mind, it certainly involves no antagonism to critical history, but passes into a higher region. Concerning this region, however, it is altogether beyond our scope to say anything. Still Baur expressed himself in such a way as to make misunderstanding to the full as possible as understanding: and he was misunderstood. Strauss's criticism (as it appears in the translation of his second 'Life', vol. i, p. 398) seems to me to rest on a misapprehension of point (i). As to point (ii) Holsten (see the first two divisions of his *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und des Petrus*) has attempted in a striking manner the analyses Baur pronounced impossible. I think, however, that it is a serious mistake to imagine that by the success or failure of such attempts the *principle* of criticism is in any way affected. These remarks have become perhaps too long: my excuse must be that the man whose procedure they discuss is worthy of this and more, if it were only worthy of him.



their absolute insolubility, if we rightly consider it, involves no less than a contradiction in terms.

We have reached the end set before us, and the title 'Presuppositions of Critical History' is, I hope, in some measure explained and justified. To have set in the presuppositions of history generally (or of history viewed as a whole) a larger task before me was once my wish. It was a desire too serious for accomplishment by me, but the truth of what has been done at present is perhaps, so far as it goes, independent of a wider result. For however humble the sphere of her rule, yet at least, while within that sphere, criticism is subject to no intrusion and oppressed by no authority. She moves on her path unheedful of the warning, unheedful of the clamour, of that which beyond her realm may be or may call itself religion and philosophy; her philosophy and her religion are the realization and the fruition of herself, and her faith is this, that while true to herself she can never find an enemy in the truth.

## APPENDIX

## NOTE A

If we wish to see with our eyes the material and the task of the historian, we must imagine a fresco representing in a continual progress the figures and the actions of generations. And this is not the work of a single artist. On the contrary the artists are many with the many generations, and at times there is more than one in a single division of the picture. But though they are many they are not all painters from the life; for some lived after the time when the figures they portrayed had perished. And of these latter some with their names have told us that they borrowed from copies now lost, and of others we do not know even this; while of some again we can see that they copied, and copied wrongly, from original drawings which we still have.

So the fresco is not simple, nor by any means one work; but in certain parts of it, representative of certain ages, we have many diverse pictures of the same figure, which all profess to be copied from the life; and over other spaces of several generations there are no drawings at all which profess to be original, but instead of them the painting of an artist of after years, who had only, if we believe the best that we can, the sketches of others to work from. And in some cases there may be one such secondary artist, but over other spaces there may be two, or three, or more; and these may not agree with one another.

Nor is this all—we have not only the differences of diverse primary painters in some spaces, and in other spaces the discrepancies of secondary artists, but in process of time the later painters have agreed in this, that the picture must be a copy of the reality, but as to the reality they have disagreed, all with the picture as it was before them, and each with one another. And wishing to have a copy of the original, they have all corrected the old figures or confusions of figures, and have remodelled and altered them to what they thought must be the life.

And the corrections of these artists have been themselves corrected by others who lived at the same time or after, so that at the first sight and to the careless eye the alterations only are to be seen, and not the underlying material. However, to the man who examines and searches, the whole chaos is visible, the drawings which call themselves original, the representations where there are no

such drawings, and then, on and over these, the ceaseless corrections and re-corrections, combinations and re-combinations, of later artists.

But this mass is the picture, and the picture represents the original. So says the world, the present generation; but it adds, 'We cannot see the original, and the artist must make us a painting which will show us the men and the times as they were. The present picture is certainly a copy of the real persons; as they were, so have they been drawn; we will not have them altered, but we must see them. Make a picture out of them!'

Is this sense or nonsense? The new picture is to be a copy of the reality, or else it is to be no picture; and the reality does not exist, and so cannot be copied. 'Who thought of copying it?' will be the answer. 'We *have* the copy in the fresco.' Then why send for an artist when you only want a photograph? Or, rather, why copy at all? If you have one copy, which is already before you, what interest can you possibly have in reproducing that? 'But the artist is not merely to reproduce. Of course he is not to alter, much less to invent, but he must put the scattered materials together.' If, however, he copies every diverse representation, and encloses the collection in a single frame, whether it agree together or whether it do not—let him quote what precedent he may, he shall not prevent our asking, *Is this a picture?* A picture represents the real, and the real is one and is self-consistent; but here the figures of the real are many and are inconsistent, and only the frame is one.

'You have not understood us. The artist is to make a picture *out of* the fresco; and *because* the reality is one *therefore* the picture will be one, and so will answer to the real.' But the real is known only through the picture, and the picture is not one, nor self-consistent. If you know that the truth in itself is one, you know it apart from the picture and in spite of the picture; and you know *what* the truth is, *that* the picture is not. *How* do you know that as it stands the picture cannot be a copy of the real? Because you know *both* original *and* copy, and you compare the two together.

'That is part true and part false', will be the reply. 'It is absurd to think we know anything of the past apart from the fresco, for this reason, that the real cannot be invented but only copied, and the past is so perished that all that we have is the copy of it. But of course we know that what is real must be self-consistent because we can see that everywhere.'

Except in the fresco. 'Yes, but that is because the different sides and parts are so scattered; bring them together, and they will represent the real, and still be a copy.'

This is the imagined task of the artist. He is not to know the original except from the fresco; and yet he is to know that the original is homogeneous, while the fresco is heterogeneous. And this is not a consistent theory. But let us pass to practice: let us see the painter at work.

He finds that in many places his materials are in a state of the completest contradiction. He finds perhaps that A kills B and marries his wife, and that B kills A and marries his wife, and then he comes to the corrections, or the 'harmonies', or the rationalizations of later artists, some of whom represent both courses of events together, while most recombine or correct or simplify.

The artist has his orders. He is to make one picture or series of pictures, and he must not alter. He of course in fact both must and does alter; but let us suppose that he abides by his instructions; then he does nothing, or rather he returns to his patrons and informs them that their task is a sheer impossibility.

And so they are driven to reflection, and they see perhaps that it is because the fresco is *not* a copy of the real that the need for a picture has been felt; and it may be they assent at length to the alteration of the material. But they do not ask themselves the question, 'Is a picture a copy?' And they do not inquire, 'How is the supposed reality of the false copy to be denied at all, if we do not know the original?'

With their denial of the knowledge of the original they combine their assertion that the picture is a false copy of that original; and the result of their reflection is this, that the copy is a false copy because it is not a *mere* copy; and it is not a mere copy because it has not been *copied*, because it has not been taken from the life but altered and reconstructed.

But how are we to know what is a copy? 'There is no difficulty; we know *that* if we know that it has been copied.' And how in the world are we to tell this? 'We are sure of it because the drawings are contemporary.' Yet surely the *professedly* original drawings do not cover the whole space of the fresco, and even of these we find on examination that some are in a style which belongs to a later age, and in these cases we doubt the genuineness of the signatures. Are these copies too?

'No, not these, if you can show there are such, but the drawings of eye-witnesses reproduce the reality.'

This seems at first sight something more tangible; but in practice we are still assailed by difficulties. In the first place the professed original drawings leave great gaps in the space of the fresco; in the

second we have in every case to determine whether the drawing is really contemporary and genuine, and for this at present we have no criterion; and in the third place we find drawings, which have to be taken all alike as copies of the reality, in irreconcilable hostility to one another.

We return baffled for further instructions. 'Of course,' we are admonished, 'it is not enough that the painter has been contemporary: he must also be willing and he must be able to copy accurately, and his relative value is to be found by study and examination.'

But by study of what? Of the fresco, or anything beside the fresco?

'Certainly you must not confine your attention to the fresco. There is painting going on all around you. You can see what are the signs of an honest copyist and an able copyist. You must apply these to the drawings in the fresco, and so will reach the reality by discovering where the artists have strayed from the right style. And as to the genuineness of the work, you ought by observation to know the marks of the truthful copyist, and the marks of the inventor and fabricator.'

Then it is not enough that the painter should be honest?

'No, for he can be clumsy; and so two honest painters can produce two contradictory copies. He must be able as well, and you must judge of this by the character of his work. If he is honest and able his work will be truthful and natural.'

But it is time to recall the original position of the artist's employers, and place it by the side of their present instructions. At first the figures of the fresco were to be reproduced without questioning or alteration, whereas now before reproduction we are to ask, Is this true? Is this natural? Have we a correct copy on the side of the artist? Have we a genuine fact for him to copy? And we find that we cannot ask ourselves these questions, till we know what is meant by a natural figure, and what is a faithful drawing of such a figure. Everything depends upon our acquaintance with this, and where are we to go to obtain information? There is no possible answer but one. To experience, to the originals of the present, for our knowledge of real objects; and to the different fashions, in which the artists of the day reproduce these, for our knowledge of styles and of peculiarities of painting, with their special relations to the object represented.

Then comes the question, Is the artist in making his picture to alter and correct the fresco? Is he merely to find out what parts of the fresco may be said to be drawings by good artists, or is he in

addition to correct at pleasure and to re-combine features or figures or groupings?

And here the employers make one last stand. 'It is absurd', they say, 'to take the world of to-day, and to alter the picture from that. You simply invent a past which you take from the present, and you cannot tell but what the past was essentially different.'

And upon this point too the artist, if he be a wise artist, will refuse to yield. 'If I could do all that I could wish to do,' he will say, 'what you too wish should be done. But the question is not as to how much you want, but as to how much I can accomplish for you. You wish to see the real; but I know no reality save that which I see and study now for myself. You ask for truth; I know no truth but the accordance of the drawing with this my world. You wish for the removal of error; I know no error but departure from the life, as now after pains and sacrifice I see it. I am to find the causes of error? And how do I know them but by experience of the work of artists, which I compare with the reality, and so study their different styles and various deflections from the truth. It comes to this—I have no reality but one, you must have that or nothing. It may be things were different in the past; I cannot help that, I did not live then. If you object to a past brought into harmony with the present, you can have nothing from me at all.

'And I do not invent a past like the present. I see many types of reality, and many styles of copying that reality. I do not say, *because* I never saw a nose or an arm like that, *therefore* it was not so: but I do say, if any feature, figure, or position is neither like any I have seen, nor is a further carrying out of tendencies that I have observed, then I will never paint it so, or approve when any one else so paints it.

'And I must tell you that really there is no copying. Every man has his style, and cannot help having it. I have mine, but I have done my best to conform it to that which is true. Perhaps I have failed. You must take me or leave me.

'But you must not think I am going to invent. I have the fresco as my material. From my knowledge of the real I can tell from one part often what another is, and so reconstruct the whole. From my knowledge of bad drawing I can often tell what it is has made the style vicious and the features distorted, and so can arrive at the original.

'I can not do much for you. I can restore a great deal and clear away more. But again and again it will be my duty to tell you that I am powerless. Further experience may help, but after all, alas,

the result may be, that of the figures of one whom we most wish to see as he was, we can accept not one as the likeness; and, after removal of vicious mannerisms and distortions, there is left some feeble and colourless outline of him in whose soul the "world's broken heart", it may be, was born again.'

## NOTE B

The doctrine of the text supplies us with a means for judging the maxim, 'Quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, . . . verum est.'

Now is there the smallest reason to suppose, merely because the existence of a phenomenon or set of phenomena has been asserted by writers in every time, that *therefore* the phenomena are real facts? What is the *ground* of the inference? General consent it cannot be: if there is one belief with a greater extension than any other, it is the belief in the reality of supernatural apparitions, witchcraft, and sorcery. Yet the educated as a rule now reject this belief.

The question is this, Why is the fact of continual assertion a ground for belief? It is not because the *quantity* of the witnesses precludes mistake—in these cases numbers are of little weight. It is because the coexistence of the same observation with apparently every variety of standpoint is a ground for concluding to *the quality of the basis* of the observation. The various points of view cancel each other, and the mutual obliteration of their differences affords in general some presumption that the residue, which was that which made the observation, is common to all, and therefore to us; is in short an observation from our own point of view. This presumption of course may or may not be justified.

Whether evidence of this sort can ever be regarded as more than probable, or as valid for science, is a question which does not concern us here. For in any case the evidence would not be historical, since it would demonstrate never the particular event at a particular time; it could never reconstruct one particular observation, but would be a general conclusion to the reality of a *class* of phenomena.

## NOTE C

Unless the matter of historical testimony is subject to analogy throughout all its details, the main argument of these pages is broken; and I confess that, in my opinion, that part of the discussion is the weakest. I will state the objection which occurs to me against it, and will then endeavour to show that the objection is not really valid, and to explain more fully the position taken in the text.

'What it comes to', it may be said, 'is no more than this. We have proof, and we have probability. Proof is scientific, a theoretical certainty; probability is not scientific, but it may be a practical certainty. Probability we admit must depend on analogy; but we utterly deny that the probable and the analogous are convertible terms, so that hence the non-analogous means the improbable.

'Can analogy<sup>1</sup> lead us to the non-analogous? Yes. It is only in the conjunction of the words that there is anything paradoxical. The real paradox is to identify the probable and the analogous, so as to be forced to assert that no non-analogous scientific fact can ever be probable.

'If we assure ourselves that the standpoint of an inquirer is the same as ours, we can receive as probable what he thinks probable, and without specific analogy from our own private experience. Or, taking his proved facts as certain, we ourselves may conclude by inference to a probable fact both new and non-analogous. In the field of science such results as these must be considered probable.

'And again in science, where I cannot be sure of the precise standpoint of the observer, I may yet take the facts, which are certain for him, as possessing at least probability, and these facts again (are) not subject to analogy.

'Turning now to history, why in the world, if I partially possess myself of the witness's consciousness, may I not regard his facts, when apart from analogy, as certainly probable? To refute me you must maintain that I cannot get a probable proof by a partial identification. And this you maintain in the teeth of facts.

'And if my conclusion is probable, and if history does not go beyond probability, why is my conclusion to stand outside when others no better are admitted?

'So much for the facts, and now for the reasoning. Analogy is not to affirm the non-analogous? Nothing is easier. You start from your private experience, and you argue by analogy to a consciousness probably right in the matter of its non-analogous testimony.

<sup>1</sup> I have throughout used 'analogy' in the ordinary sense, which prohibits our applying the term to personal observation. But, if we look closer, in the extension of our experience we use what may be considered as analogical reasoning. In observing an altogether new sort of fact, the parts of the fact are brought into the mind by subsumption under certain known heads. If it were not so we could not observe the fact at all, as it would come into no relation with our minds. This process might improperly be called 'analogy'. The fact as a whole is of course not accounted for so. It requires to be made one object by a synthetic act of the mind.



You get the fact of a man, whose evidence, even apart from analogy, is probably right; and then you receive as probable his testimony *en bloc*, though supported in detail by no analogy. To the particular facts you have nothing similar, but to the main fact which contains them you have; and this main fact rests upon analogy and makes its particulars thereby probable.

‘(And, briefly to illustrate, there may be supposed events in history which, though not in contradiction with my notion of the Divinity, may yet involve attributes supported by no analogy from that idea and experience which I have. Yet on evidence I am bound to believe in these attributes, unless the others exclude them; and why cannot history prove them probably by a partial identification with the consciousness of the witness?)’

Thus far the objection. There is in it little that we cannot adopt, except the particular application to history.

The problem is as follows. Let us suppose a man in the past whose point of view is equal to our own. Let us suppose that he testifies to an event in history, and further to a non-analogous event. His evidence is not scientific, because we cannot assure ourselves of the conditions of his observation. Yet his evidence amounts to a high degree of scientific probability. This case is certainly conceivable. Why then, the question arises, is that which is probable enough for science actually not probable enough for history?

I answer that I do not deny the mere amount of probability. I admit that the case in question may actually possess a greater probability than most of the events, than all if you will, which I make part of history; but none the less do I say that I will never receive that event as historical, except upon analogy from the present.

We must make a distinction. For science there is proof and there is probability; there are likely but uncertain facts, and probable but unverified hypotheses; but for science there is no such thing as a probable *conclusion*. The conclusions of science, which it takes for certainties, are never, while science is true to itself, anything short of fully proved. Science recognizes theoretical but not moral probability; and it cannot do this latter, because practical probability may amount to certainty.

The conclusions of history are never proved; they are first theoretical probabilities, and secondly they are more, they are moral certainties. In history the conclusions are moral certainties; but, as history is not practical, its results must be theoretical, and hence while probable are still received as theoretical certainties.

A theoretical certainty must be taken as certain, i.e. as more than

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probable conclusion. One of three things must be done then. We must habitually consider the events in history either (i) as theoretically probable, and that means uncertain; or (ii) as morally certain, whether with or apart from analogy; or (iii) as morally certain only when supported by analogy.

The first course (i) simply means that you have no history at all. For history you must have facts, you must have something you can believe in, and say of it 'this was so'. The mind must feel itself at home in the past; and it cannot do that when the past is represented by nothing but a present of doubtfully-weighted probabilities. History here is a word without meaning; yet history there ever must be and, let it be a delusion or not, we at least assume that it is not so.

If history exists it must be more than uncertain. We pass to the second question (ii) and ask, Is history to be considered as (morally) theoretically certain, and that independent of analogy? The historical order is here an hypothesis or theory which is taken as true. Let us reflect on the result of receiving as true a conclusion in history apart from present scientific analogy.

This conclusion is not scientific, for it is not proved but only probable. For science the facts and the conclusions from the facts are not admitted as realities; and yet for history these same facts are certain. This means that what is true, what you believe, what is a fact, what really has happened, at the same time is not true, may not be believed, is not yet a fact, and cannot be said to have happened. The collision is inevitable, since the facts are the property of both spheres alike. The theorist of course may keep up the distinctions, and may never forget the saving clauses; but for the practical historian or man of science this is simply impossible. The whole interest of history is to have one truth, one reality, then as now, and now as then. One course or another must be taken. Either against the scientific conscience, and to the loss of science, the historical reality must become the scientific reality; and that means that the un-analogous hypotheses and traditional facts must be received into science as verified certainties, with their consequences developed in every direction, to provoke a collision at each new discovery—or else (and this must be the better alternative) scientific evidence is made the criterion, and historical testimony subjected throughout and in all its details to analogy from that. This is the real interest of history, to find what it knows under other aspects. This is the method, and this alone, by which to avoid the struggle of truth against truth and reality against reality—a collision intolerable to

the oneness of the mind which bears the distraction. The third way (iii) is thus the only course possible to save us from scepticism in history or from credulity in science. It is the one path open to the practical critic; and this is the justification of a suspension of judgement in presence of even more than a sufficient probability. Suspension of judgement is, however, exclusion from history.

Long as this note has become, there are yet two points which deserve our attention. The first is merely an illustration from legal proceedings. Let us suppose in a criminal case that, to prove the theory of the prisoner's guilt, an attested fact must be taken as true, though the judge and the jury are aware of nothing analogous. Speaking as one who is ignorant of law, I venture to think that on no common evidence would the prisoner be convicted. Scientific witnesses would be required; and if their testimony was insufficient for an actual enlargement of the experience of the jury and the judge, I do not see how a conclusion could be come to. Yet, while legal is stronger as a rule than historical evidence, still legal are weaker in one way than historical conclusions. A verdict is an opinion of particular persons on a particular case; a fact in history is a past reality. This difference comes from the difference of the interest.

The second point is what seems an inconsistency in historical practice. The probability, which actually itself would not be taken into history, nevertheless is used as the basis of an analogy for theorizing tradition into an historical fact. For instance the probable evidence of past stigmatization (which would not, in default of present analogy, prove the historical fact) would perhaps and by some persons, if it were present, be made to justify the affirmation in history of the existence of stigmata. I must doubt whether this course is critical; but it is important as showing the interest of history, which moulds the past after the present, and for which the present probability is at once a canon, simply because it is present.

#### NOTE D

It would be a serious mistake to suppose, because at a certain time criticism is not justified in considering an event historical, that *therefore* criticism will *never* be able to affirm it. There are several instances to the contrary.

Herodotus records the account of the circumnavigation of Africa (iv. 42), and does not believe it, because it contained a fact which to him seemed incredible, since utterly without analogy (as he thought) in the astronomical world (ἔλεγον ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστά, ἄλλω δὲ δὴ τεω, ὥς περιπλώοντες τὴν Λιβύην τὸν ἥλιον ἔσχον ἐς τὰ δεξιά). This

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very circumstance, as the commentators remark on the passage, is the best evidence for the truth of the Phoenicians' story.

The accounts of stigmatization furnish another example. It was clearly impossible for the critical historian to receive this testimony in the absence of any present scientific analogy. But if (as seems likely) such analogy exists, if the possibility of the phenomenon can be scientifically proved, the case as to the medieval stories is at once altered; and their possible reception becomes a mere question of the amount and quality of the historical evidence.

Again, in the face of admittedly strong historical evidence, Gibbon (cap. xxxvii) declined to believe that the African confessors spoke without tongues. Gibbon was unquestionably right, since he had before him nothing analogous. It turns out now to be the fact, however, and is said to be proved by repeated scientific experiments, that speech is possible after the total excision of the tongue. The attitude of the historian to the supposed miracle must now of course be different, and the testimony may be received and weighed.

The rule for the critical historian is always to keep on the side of safety. It is better to suspend the judgement and be wrong, than to be right against reason and in the face of science.

### NOTE E

Everything, we have said, depends on personal experience. And this means that, when pressed, we must come to and must start from that; must from the ground of that connect our self with past selves, so as to know what once on a time was fact for them; and so as to know that it also is fact for us now, because in respect of the class of phenomena in question their consciousness is identical with ours. In critical history we either perform this operation ourselves, or we take it for granted that it has been or could be done.

And with the phrases of 'personal observation' and 'experience' we have said enough doubtless, if that were our object, to satisfy most persons, or at least to stop their mouths. But a man who inquires will wish to go farther.

'I know well', he may say, 'that fresh observation and facts are supposed to give the basis from which to correct or make valid the old material. But what I do not see is how on your standpoint such a position is possible.

'You say that all is inferential. This must mean that, as are the premises of the inference, so also are the conclusions. To get beyond your premises is surely impossible; and as for correcting them, that is nonsense.

'Come to the facts. It is notorious that a man may be quite incapable of receiving essentially and vitally new facts in their essential and vital meaning. He *will* subsume them under his own categories; he must make them members of his world, or not take them in at all. As is the man, so are his facts. Uneducated persons and children transform to their own likeness all they assimilate: and savages are in many cases literally unable to take in what to us seem simple impressions of passivity, for this sufficient reason that they have no internal world which answers to them, no premises under which to subsume them.

'What it comes to is this. A man has a certain world to start with, and he doesn't know how he has got it: this world contains every sort of matter, historical and otherwise. "*Personal observation!*" What on earth does "*personal*" mean, when the contents of his person, his personal world, are already traditional and decidedly not his in particular? And what sense is there in sending him to "observation", when that only enlarges but cannot correct or innovate, for the simple reason that what is not in harmony excludes itself from observation? 'This "personal experience" is a mere superstition, for nothing is more personal to any man than the traditional world already personal within him.

'You have used "inference" to knock down "fact"; and now from "fact" you want to start to get a basis for inference. But all facts are alike in being inferential, and therefore alike in this, that they issue from and are based on the given.'

The objection is well worth considering in itself, and comes to this, 'How are critical observation and experience possible?' This is a somewhat wide question, and we make not the smallest profession of discussing it here. And we are not obliged to discuss it. It may seem that we are so: it may seem that we have rested on critical experience, and are therefore bound to explain its possibility.

This is quite wrong. What we wanted to show was this, that *given* the existence of history, it must be critical; and that *if* it is critical, *then* it must rest on present critical experience. That is our whole conclusion; and if any one chooses to argue, "There is no *critical* experience and therefore no *critical* history", we shall not contend with him, but merely add 'and therefore no history at all', and treat his subsequent historical dogmatism with silent contempt.

Not for the sake of our argument, then, do we feel bound to consider the objection we have developed; but entirely for the sake of the subject of the objection itself are we willing to say something; not much, but not much less than what we have learnt.

In the sharpest form of the difficulty it comes to the old crux,

'knowledge implies previous knowledge', or 'subsumption previous subsumption', and is directed against the possibility of any beginning, and hence against the existence of knowledge at all.

It is impossible to attempt to deal with this here. Nor does it touch the particular case. We are not treating of the beginning of knowledge and experience in general, but find ourselves on a problem in the middle of the stream.

As it touches us the problem is this. 'Since you start from the given, and rest on the given, which at all events *may* come to you as uncriticized and uncritical—*how* are you to criticize it? How *from* what is given get to that which is critical, when the source and instrument vitiates the outcome, when the unsurveyed foundation damns the edifice? If you tell a superstitious man to observe *personally*, do you really think that he will observe critically? Only the critical mind is capable of critical observation, and a mind full of uncritical matter cannot possibly be critical.'

It is a hard question, but we must try to answer. We must bear in mind that in the growth of knowledge there are two sides. On one side we have the given whole, the world, or the consciousness, or the self—briefly that which is *so far* the real. And now under this we bring fresh facts. We subsume them under that which we have and we are; and this means that they become a part of the whole, which *therefore*, and as over against the *former* world, is a fresh whole.

But we shall be cut short here. 'This is not to the purpose. What you want is to get a split between fresh observation and the old world, and you can't do it this way. You forget that the facts not already of a piece with the system are *not* subsumed, and hence the whole may be overlooked but is never criticized. It only grows like the lower forms of nature by accretion and not by evolution, by simple addition of new material and not by a process of differentiation and integration.'

We resume. And it doubtless is true that in some individuals, and in some countries and times, to a certain extent this is the case. If it always were true, then there would be no criticism nor any critical observation. But as a matter of fact humanity does not grow in this way and it cannot. And what is the reason of this? Where is it that the description of progress as growth by accretion is incorrect? When is a split between new and old a possibility?

When the old involves a contradiction; i.e. when, supposing itself to be a system, it in reality is not consistent. Then that which is subsumed under it will also be inconsistent, inconsistent with the old

and also with itself. The contradictory elements will be exhibited in their freedom and, by the particularization of fresh subsumption and by growing divergencies in consciousness, will contradict the unity of consciousness. The uneasiness will cause reflection on the object or stage of consciousness (both are the same), and then an alienation and rejection.

'But in this what about the new personal observation? Are not the system and its particular subsumptions all negated alike?' They are; and it is possible that, turning away from both old and new, the mind may suspend itself dissatisfied, and here again the critical experience be wanting.

But the mind is such a unity that it holds a contradiction in itself until the divided elements cohere, are solved and blended into another consciousness, a fresh system, a new world—new, and which contains the old in a transformed shape.

And this is why (to begin with 'personal') the personality is wanted; for that is no less than the principle of synthesis which makes this new world.

'Let all this be true,' it will still be rejoined, 'you have got a split between the reflecting person and the old world. But what of experience and observation? What have they to do with your new synthesis, your new object, your re-systematized world?'

Patience! I reply. The new synthesis is not yet a world, but an embryo world; and further, the new principle, which has resulted from the negation of the old, may either be itself an object *for* consciousness, or may be merely a consciousness which is not yet aware of itself; i.e. it may be a new doctrine that we are aware of, and go forth to realize against the old, or may be the changed attitude of mind that knows itself as yet only as the denial of the old world, and must have a new world to know what itself is.

In the former case it is a conscious principle, but abstract and undeveloped; and it is a new object, but still subjective, not yet evolved or known in its determinations. You want to know what this new world is in the concrete? You must see for yourself. Subsume particulars under it; fill it with matter, and you will see. Realize it, and you will find what it is you have realized. That is why personal observation is wanted.

The old matter of the old system is vitiated throughout, because vitalized by a defunct theory. You want sound matter, and you get it by subsuming under principles which you feel to be true. Thus you make a system, the principle and details of which are both known to you. And now you can re-systematize the material of the old

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world. You could not do it before because the old world was so particularized that nothing abstract could reorganize its details. You wanted a principle truly particularized into the concrete; and now you have that, you can proceed, remembering that the new object is the real object, and the old powerless before it.

Or, in the second case, the new consciousness is not aware of itself. It knows itself only as the self, for which the old world is inadequate and alien; it feels the impulse to find itself anew in another world; but it has no principle under which it consciously subsumes; the self which subsumes is not, as self, an object of consciousness. It *finds* a fresh object, it *sees* a new world grow up before it, and it thinks of itself as the passive and reflecting mirror. By observation it gets its new world, and from that it learns the nature of itself. It gets the consciousness of the principle which was the unknown agent at work, and then from that basis it can proceed to re-include the old rejected elements.

So far we have considered that progress which involves a breach with the existing world. But we have yet the case before us where it is the finding of new facts which seems to overthrow a hitherto unsuspected creed, and premises sound in themselves.

We must go back for a space. We first saw how the mind, as a world or system, finds itself in an object of like nature; we saw how it was a contradiction involved in the consciousness which made the subsumed object contradictory; and next how the mind, as unity, rose above its own contradiction, and reflected on and negated its former stage of consciousness or world.

But such conscious reflection is by no means the normal process of empirical development; and, as often as not, the old is not negated till it is found existing peacefully side by side with a new state of things, which has got there Heaven knows how. How did it get there?

It is the unconscious reflective action and systematization of the mind which has made it. The proceeds of experience are contradictory, and the mind is a principle of unity. It feels the contradictions and, without knowing it, is more or less alienated from its contents, but comes to no downright breach with the world. On the contrary it imagines itself to be bringing all new details faithfully under the old world or old self; and it does not know that *itself* is the active principle of subsumption, and that it no longer is one with the former self. From that old self it separates itself more and more, develops and partially solves its contradictions, critically corrects its one-sidednesses, rules out its inconsistencies with unconscious but



incessant activity; and all the time is subsuming new matter under this innovating and perpetually growing self.<sup>1</sup> The assimilated details, it is obvious, no longer will bear the character and form the counterpart of the old self, but show more and more in their development the results of the mind's unconscious work; and, being subsumed into the new self, react powerfully upon it to increased separation from the former stage of consciousness, and to the production of fresh facts which are still less in harmony with the old system of belief.

All this time, however, the subsuming self, as in a succession of fresh individuals it gets farther and farther removed, still thinks itself loyal to the ancient creed, which really is rapidly becoming (or may even in parts or altogether have become) a traditional mass, a semi-effete stage of consciousness, an organism from which the life has been drawn by a younger organism to feed itself, a dead or half-dead self existing in and alongside of a new world and a new self. At this epoch the smallest shock—any extra-contradiction between the two lives, a sudden discovery, or in short any accident—will force upon the mind the consideration of what it really is, and the startling and appalling revelation that it has two selves and a double world. Whether a contest ensues will depend on how far the soul has been withdrawn from the elder organism, and how far the younger has appropriated to itself all sides of the reality. But in any case the victory will lie with the new (though the new may be forced in the struggle to extend and modify itself), since it is the self which pleads and judges its own cause; and, after vehement reaction (it may be) and violent rejection of the old, the traditional mass, the effete organism will itself be assimilated, and live once more in the new and reintegrated body.

If the further question be put 'What necessity is there for the given world to be self-contradictory?' this note must certainly be kept within bounds; but briefly an answer might be given, which appears the best to give. The universe seems to be one system; it is an organism (it would appear) and more. It bears the character of the self, the personality to which it is relative, and without which

<sup>1</sup> We may consider the process as taking place in one and the same mind, or series of minds; but in reality the differentiation of the old system of belief is accelerated by the diversity of individualities. In an inconsistent substance the inconsistencies are explicated by being more or less fixed, in different individuals, as one-sided personalities. The collision of these is an instigation to the general mind to recover and re-collect itself from them into a consistent centre of integration.

for us it is as good as nothing. Hence any portion of the universe by itself cannot be a consistent system; for it refers to the whole, and has the whole present in it. Potentially the whole (since embodying that which is actually the whole), in trying to fix itself as itself, it succeeds only in laying stress on its character of relativity; it is carried beyond and contradicts itself. Or more briefly thus. Evolution is necessary because the mind is actually limited, virtually unlimited; and the object lives in the life of the mind and varies with it.

To sum the result. 'Go to *experience*' does not *here* imply respect for one class of facts alone. You go to experience to know what facts in general are, since the only way to realize your principle, to know what your premises are, what your system is and is to be, is to subsume matter under it. And 'Go to *personal* experience' is essential, not because, as this or that man, you are better than anybody else who is or has been; but just as experience is necessary to get facts for your principle, and tell you what it is, so *you* must form the matter by subsumption in order to know that it has been subsumed under *your* principle, and is therefore *a fact for you*.

No facts but my facts; and only through my facts do I realize myself, and know what I am. Personal observation does not mean that this or that sensuous matter comes into relation with this or that sensuous individual. To imagine that in this is to be found the smallest guarantee or test of truth is a wretched superstition, a proof of the most utter philosophical uneducatedness, and that completest blindness to the experience of everyday life which is possible only to a vicious *a priori* dogmatism. 'Experience' means the verification in the concrete, and the bringing to consciousness (formally or in detail) of our known or unknown actuating principle and presupposition; and 'personal' means that our world is to be a unity answering to our oneness—it means the emphasis of the idea of system in a new man.

## II

### MR. SIDGWICK'S HEDONISM

An examination of the main argument of *The Methods of Ethics*

#### PREFACE

THE following pages are intended to supply, not a general review or estimate of *The Methods of Ethics*, but an examination of the main argument of that work, the thesis it supports, and the steps by which it goes to its conclusion.

The position which Mr. Sidgwick's book has taken in the literature of the day fully justifies the length of this examination. The remarks which I found space to make in my *Ethical Studies* were, I fear, too brief and condensed to express my objections. And I think that a discussion of the subject in detail can hardly fail to be of use to the student of Moral Philosophy.

From the first I have found Mr. Sidgwick's book not easy to understand, and it is probable that in some points I may have misapprehended his meaning. My own belief is that Mr. Sidgwick's argument is in itself not clear, and that the obscurity arises from the omission on his part of any serious attempt to arrive at an understanding of the fundamental preconceptions with which he operates. In this the reader may find I am mistaken; but I cannot doubt that the inquiry, if it does not prove the edifice unstable, will at least bring more clearly into light the nature of the foundation. And this will be a result well worth the labour.

What I have tried to do is first of all, at the price, I fear, of a great deal of tediousness, to help the reader to master the most prominent conceptions of the book, and to bring to light the obscurity and ambiguous nature of the leading terms and the equivocal character of the main thesis. Then, in Part II, I have entered on the proof of the thesis which is offered, and have endeavoured to show that it is unsatisfactory. Lastly, in Part III § 8, I have tried to exhibit the real nature of the author's proposed Ethical Science, and to point out some of the objections to which it lies open; and in § 9 I have discussed the problem, partly moral and partly theological, which is raised at the end of Mr. Sidgwick's work. Some general remarks on the 'objective' character of morality have been excluded from want of space.

MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD.

1877

## PART I. THE DEFINITIONS

### § 1. *Reason*

NO one, I think, who reads *The Methods of Ethics* can fail to be struck by the recurrence of the word 'reasonable'. Plainly it is a term we ought to understand, for the Right, the Good, the End, the Desirable, all seem to fall under it<sup>1</sup> and to depend on it for their meaning. It

<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that 'reasonable', 'right', 'ought', all stand for the same idea (29), and as little doubt that 'preferable', 'desirable', 'the end', are equivalent. True, 'good' can be distinguished from 'right', but for our purpose the distinction seems to be of no importance, and (as applied to conduct) they 'coincide substantially' (98). Indeed (80, note) we hear

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is scarcely saying too much when we say that Mr. Sidgwick's main thesis stands and falls with his view of the 'reasonable'. But when we ask, Has the word been explained with sufficient clearness? I think the answer must be, No.

What is reason? It is defined (27) as 'a faculty which takes cognizance of objective truth'. We shall have to ask hereafter what 'objective' in general means, but here 'objective truth' seems opposed to 'purely subjective phenomena', 'the sensations of the sentient being' (23), and is 'the same, whether recognized or not, for all Minds or Subjects' (182).<sup>1</sup>

But in what way does reason apprehend truth? Is it merely 'discursive'? No, 'it seems . . . to belong to reason not merely to judge of the relation of means to ends, or of the consistency of maxims: but also to determine the ultimate ends and true first principles of action' (26). This 'operation' is 'intuitive'.

Reason, so far, is not merely discursive but also 'intuitive'; and the question which remains is as to the nature of the 'objective truth' which it apprehends. For—

'we do not say, in physics, that individual facts are apprehended by the Reason: we consider this faculty to be conversant in its discursive operation with the relation of judgments or propositions; and the intuitive reason (which is here rather in question) we restrict to the apprehension of universal truths, such as the axioms of logic and mathematics. Now, as I shall presently notice, it is not uncommonly held that the moral faculty judges primarily of individual cases, applying directly to these the general notion of Duty, and deciding intuitively what ought to be done by this person in these particular circumstances. On this view the moral apprehension is more analogous to Sense-Perception than to Rational Intuition (as of 'right' and 'reasonable', and the equivalent phrase 'what ought to be' (done or aimed at). I am not sure whether 'good' and 'reasonable' are ever coupled, but the end is the 'end of reason', and the good is the rational end or ends. It would tend to clearness if we were told at the beginning which of these terms are convertible, or at all events whether we have to do with one, or more than one, 'fundamental notion'.

<sup>1</sup> It is right that I should say here that I cannot reconcile with this Mr. Sidgwick's view as to Egoism being reasonable. See below, p. 102, note, and pp. 116-17.

commonly understood): and hence the term Moral Sense has been preferred by many, who did not mean to suggest thereby any scepticism as to the reality of moral (as distinct from psychological) truth. But it is so important to avoid this suggestion, that it seems better to use generally the term Reason: provided it be not supposed to mean anything more specific than "a faculty which takes cognizance of objective truth" (26-7).

We find, however, that it does hereafter mean something more specific. We find (85) that, in speaking of 'the popular view of Conscience', our writer says:

'This view may be called ultra-intuitional, as it recognizes simple immediate intuitions alone and rejects all modes of reasoning to moral conclusions. But it may equally well be called ultra-empirical as it emphasizes the authority of particular moral experiences in comparison with universal rules or axioms. This then we may describe as one phase or variety of the Intuitional method, involving really a negation of method, and excluding what is more strictly called Reason from moral decisions.'

And then comes this note to the word Reason, 'i.e. the faculty of apprehending universal truth'.

It would appear then that in future we have to deal with a strict and a loose use of Reason, but I cannot find that in the sequel, when Reason comes in, we are clearly told *which* Reason is meant. On this point I have found Mr. Sidgwick very hard to understand, but I will try to put before the reader what seems to be his doctrine.

I think that Reason stands for the faculty which apprehends 'universal truth' (85), 'general rules', 'abstract moral notions', 'moral axioms' (87), and further that it includes as well the *reasoning* to particular cases from 'general moral maxims', whether these latter are 'universal moral intuitions' (190) or not. The word *may* cover more, but I doubt it.

Now (this is an important matter) is 'conscience', in the sense of a judgement on particular cases (85), irrational? I think not. 'Even when the decision of the moral faculty is felt to relate primarily to some particular action, we cannot really exclude generality from the notion of the action thus judged to be right' (86). 'The

moral truth apprehended will be intrinsically universal, though particular in our first apprehension of it' (ibid.). And (189) we find that all moral judgements have a 'potential universality'. The result seems to be that 'conscience' is not irrational; but it certainly is 'unreasoned'. 'Reflective conscientious persons' are 'inclined to bring' each case 'under some general rule' (ibid.).

In both cases, of the immediate and the reflective conscience alike, I take it that reason gives, or at least apprehends, the general; but the latter case is 'reasoned'; there is an explicit reasoning which brings the particular as an instance under the universal rule. Then what are we to say about the former case? In what sense is reason present in non-reflective conscience? Does reason here give a product in which both elements exist but are not distinguished? Is reason here in a 'potential' or 'intrinsical' or 'latent' state in which it gives an individual intuition? That is one view. Or are we to say that this intuition in which the two elements are not made explicit is not really reason at all? That is another view. On this 'potentially universal' would mean that you can by reflection separate the two elements implicit in the individual judgement, and then the universal element, when explicit, is apprehended by reason, though not before.<sup>1</sup> But which view is our author's I cannot say.

I am afraid that this discussion may appear to the reader mere verbal trifling, but he will find, I think, on reflection, that the subject of 'potential universality' calls for a clearer explanation than it has received, and again that it is a most important matter to know whether reason apprehends the individual or only the general. When we come to argue from the nature of reason to the nature of the end, this difference must seriously affect our conclu-

<sup>1</sup> I fail to understand Mr. Sidgwick when (27) he speaks of a view which holds that 'the moral faculty judges primarily of individual cases, applying directly to these the general notion of Duty, and deciding intuitively what ought to be done by this person in these particular circumstances'. His language here implies that the general notion is explicit, and that to some extent the judgement is reflective; but this can hardly be what he means to say.

sion. But for the present all we can say is that what is true for reason seems in the main to be that which is true in general or in the abstract.

### § 2. *Practical Reason*

So far we have had to do with reason as cognitive; and now we are come to practical reason, the light grows dimmer and dimmer, and we see little more than that we are encountered by at least some of the difficulties of Kant's ethical dualism.

'The real end of Reason' is the same as 'the absolutely good' (391); but how can *reason* give an *end*? 'The Moral Reason is a Spring of Action' (x). Reason 'dictates'. 'Reason prompts us to a certain kind of action' (29-30). Reason has "'a categorically imperative" function' (24). So far there seems to be no doubt.

'Acting rationally' is acting 'from an impulse in harmony with an intellectual apprehension of an objective rule, or intrinsically desirable end' (43). 'That in us which claims authority is never a mere sentiment, but always a faculty cognizant of an objective rule or imperative which exists independently of its effect on our feelings, and such a faculty is what we must mean by Reason' (62). 'There actually is found in man a certain impulse to do what is reasonable as such' (x). There is a 'central desire to do Right as such' (347).

But what does all this mean? I confess I cannot say. Reason seems to be 'a spring of action' in this sense, that when reason says, Something ought to be done, then there goes with that a desire to do what reason orders. So much seems clear, but it does not tell us how reason can order.

Are we to say that in practical reason thought and will are united in such a way that the object of this faculty is no mere *fact* which we recognize, but an *end*, an idea which in us calls for its reality? Then what need for an adventitious desire to turn reason into a 'spring of action'? Are we to say that practical reason is *made* practical by this desire, that the addition of this desire to theoretic



reason constitutes practical reason? This does not seem to be our author's view. For—

'It is enough if it be granted that there exists in all moral agents as such a permanent desire . . . to do what is right or reasonable because it is such: so that when our practical reason recognizes any course of conduct as right, this desire immediately impels us with a certain force towards such conduct' (27).

Clearly then, even apart from the desire, reason is still practical, though not perhaps 'a spring of action'.

But then how can reason give an *end*? How can it 'prompt' or 'dictate' or be 'categorically imperative'? Is there, besides the desire which makes it a 'spring', *another* desire which makes it practical? If so, what is it after all which gives the end? If not so, how can reason 'prescribe' and order, as well as perceive? Is to be 'cognizant of an imperative' the same thing as to give an order?

It is possible that our author's view may be that desire gives the end, while reason qualifies it. *What* the end is reason does not know, but, *given* the end, it further determines its nature, and so brings into play a third element, the 'central desire to do Right as such'. If so, the end is hardly the 'end of Reason', and reason is no more categorical, but hypothetical, or at best, with co-ordinate authority. But I do not think this is what Mr. Sidgwick means.

The following questions I think need an answer. Is reason nothing but 'the slave of the passions'? Does desire give the end and reason calculate the means? Certainly our author does not hold this. Does reason desire or will? This again he seems reluctant to affirm. But if it does not desire and will, how can the end be the end of reason? If reason is no more than 'cognizant of an imperative', how is it practical? Is my reason practical when I read an Act of Parliament? Does my sight 'prompt' or 'dictate' when I see a police notice on the wall? When I hear the word Forward, are my ears 'categorically imperative'?

Does reason tell you what to do, or does it tell you only what you are told to do? Does it give orders, or do no more than carry them? And then *whose* orders does it carry?

To explain our *obedience* to the order by bringing in a desire for the reasonable does not help us at all. The question is not, Does an emotion attend the *recognition* of a mere fact? For in morality we have not to do with a mere fact, with this or that command which is prescribed from without, seen perhaps by reason, and then obeyed by desire and will: nor, I think, does our author hold this. In morality we prescribe to and dictate to ourselves. We do not perceive that there *is* an order, we *give* that order, and we *put* an end before ourselves to be done. And how can reason do this? If we abstract from desire and will, what is left of 'end' and 'ought' and 'imperative'? Has 'This is my *end*' any sense when desire is kept out, or comes in but to say '*And I will do it*'? Does not end mean will, and my end my will?

I can find no answer to these questions in *The Methods of Ethics*. It is not fair to our author, I admit, to ask him for a psychology which he does not undertake to give. It is fair to point out that the psychological doctrine, which (whatever it may be) he most undeniably does put forward, is either wholly obscure, or else labours under well-known difficulties which are not met, but which, if not met, must gravely affect his thesis.

The question of this section, if we put it from the other end, is, What is the relation of desire to the desirable? and that word leads us to the following section.

### § 3. *The Desirable and Pleasure*

I am afraid the reader will be tired already by these questions about words, but we cannot go on until we have asked what 'desirable' means. In ordinary English it is the same as what 'is to be' or 'should be' desired, but it *may* also stand for that which simply can be desired, or does excite desire. The latter usage, I believe, has no place in our spoken language, and even in literature per-

haps is obsolete, but still it exists. How does Mr. Sidgwick use the word?

When it appears in his writing apart from its connexion with ethical questions I think it *always* bears the first sense. But what is its more technical meaning? Passages (at the foot of pp. 137, 318) show that it is not equivalent to 'desired'; and (93 note) we find '“Good” = “intrinsically preferable or desirable”', and again (391) we hear of 'the real end of Reason, the absolutely Good or Desirable'. Clearly then desirable or preferable = good or end (cf. 60, 133, 183).

Nor can the phrases 'intrinsically', 'absolutely', 'objectively', 'ultimately', 'in itself', be taken to differentiate desirable and good, for they are applied to both; 'the ultimate end, or entity, regarded as intrinsically good and desirable' (66; cf. 369, 391, 392 note). And moreover we find 'good' and 'desirable' coupled without qualification (95 last line; cf. 94, 369), and (9) 'desirable' is used as one notion with 'intrinsically good', or 'end which Reason regards as ultimate'.

So far we see that 'desirable' = 'good' or 'end'.

'Let then pleasure be defined as feeling that is preferable or desirable, considered merely as feeling' (118). 'Pleasure being defined as “feeling judged to be preferable or desirable considered merely as feeling”' (xii). 'To mean by Pleasure only Preferable or Desirable Feeling of whatever kind' (372). 'Happiness, or the sum of such feelings as, at the time that they are felt, are immediately known to be intrinsically desirable' (368). Mark here '*intrinsically*'. 'The kind of feeling which is most pleasant or preferable as feeling' (162).

What is all this? The end of the argument being to show that pleasure and good are the same, is it possible that here at the beginning we have 'good' and 'end' inserted into the definition of pleasure? I think we shall find this really is the case. The audacious *petitio principii* which commended itself to Mr. Mill (365) is perhaps more veiled in our author's pages, but through its thin

disguise we recognize the old cause of our errors, the unconscious equivocation by which desirable means indifferently, What I like, or, What I ought to like, just as the conclusion suggests.<sup>1</sup>

I think the reader will search in vain for any passage in which Mr. Sidgwick discriminates these two meanings of 'desirable'. In his argument it is the second which is prominent, but in his definition of pleasure he has the first in view; if, that is to say, he really does in his own mind distinguish between them. Let us see what the definition of pleasure is.

Pleasure is 'the kind of feeling which pleases us, which we like or prefer' (114).<sup>2</sup> In short, it is 'agreeable sensation' (33, 41) or 'agreeable feeling' (x).

So far we have seen that desirable or preferable can pass either for pleasant or good, and so is a ready means for identifying these terms. And now we must ask more narrowly as to this pleasure which is the end for Hedonism.

Pleasure we saw was feeling that is desirable as feeling, and now what is feeling? That question must be answered before we can proceed.

We hear (76-7) of a 'certain state or quality of the consciousness of the agent which we call Pleasure or Satisfaction', and this leads us to doubt, first, whether pleasure be a feeling or the quality of a feeling,<sup>3</sup> and second, whether feeling is the same as consciousness. The latter point is of great importance because, as we know, there is no psychical phenomenon whatever which 'consciousness' has not been used to cover.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to see that, in his remarks on Mr. Mill's proof of Utilitarianism, our author calls attention to the fact that in this 'desirable' = what one *ought* to desire' (365), and instructive to notice that he seems unaware of Mr. Mill's equivocation. He understands the latter writer to make an *inference* 'from the universal desiredness to the desirability of Happiness' (366); against which interpretation I will simply refer the reader to the passage as Mr. Sidgwick himself quotes it (365).

<sup>2</sup> I am anxious not to disturb the exposition by avoidable criticism, but I must point out that to insert the conception of *preference* into the definition of pleasure seems wholly indefensible.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 82, and p. 96, note.

Pleasure (389) is 'to include the highest and most refined kinds of preferable or desirable consciousness'. Happiness is 'the most pleasant consciousness conceivable' (19). 'Happiness was explained to be preferable or desirable feeling or consciousness' (369). And (78) we see 'a pleasure' may mean 'a whole state of consciousness which is only partly pleasurable'.

Of course if our author likes to identify consciousness and feeling he has a right to do so, but then we have a right to ask him to be consistent in his usage. This I think he is not.

We find (52; cf. 164) that 'passive' and 'active consciousness' are distinguished, and the former identified with 'pleasure or pain or desire or aversion'. 'Changes in the train of ideas and feelings that constitutes our conscious life' (52). 'Conscious existence, the stream of action and feeling' (102). 'Conscious life includes besides actions the whole range of feeling' (103). And (179) action and feeling are distinguished. Again (131-2) 'cognitive' consciousness is distinguished from 'presentative consciousness', and further the latter from feeling.<sup>1</sup>

In short, while on the one hand feeling and consciousness seem convertible, on the other hand consciousness is by far the wider term, and covers the whole self. We find (171) 'life or consciousness'; and the result of this somewhat loose terminology is that instead of 'agreeable sensation or feeling' we can write if we please 'desirable conscious life'. And this is no mere inference of our own,

<sup>1</sup> I am not sure whether it has any bearing on the subject, but in fairness I should say that (164) Mr. Sidgwick distinguishes 'our faculties' from 'the mental phenomena which result from their exercise', of which latter alone we are 'directly cognizant' (cf. 193). The faculties I take to be the same as the 'possibilities' or 'tendencies' (whatever they are) which, in addition to the actual existence, i.e. 'particular states', constitute our being (102-3). I give this view because I feel so little at home with Mr. Sidgwick that I cannot say whether it may not be relevant here. But in any case the confusion would remain. For while we saw on the one hand feeling = consciousness, we have again 'the transitory phenomena' (which appear to be the 'effects' of the 'possibilities') described as 'actions or feelings' (193). So again 'feeling or cognition' (23; cf. 102-3, 170).

but, as we shall see, Mr. Sidgwick does actually do it in the very crisis of his argument (373). Must we not say then that as in 'desirable' we had a *petitio principii*, so now in the wavering phrase 'consciousness', which is the same as feeling, and yet includes thought and action, and which enables us to write Life for the sake of life, instead of Pleasure for pleasure's sake, we have a considerable *ignoratio elenchi*? I think we must say this, but we must add that the confusion slides in in the argument, and that in the definition our author avoids it.

Returning now to the subject of pleasure, let us ask in what sense is this defined to be the end? The vital point is this. Is *the pleasant* the end? Or is *pleasure* the end? The former question we may answer in the affirmative and yet be not one step nearer Hedonism. But if we say, The end is pleasure as distinct from that which is pleasant, then that is Hedonism. And our author does answer the question so. He does not say clearly whether mere pleasure is a feeling or only the quality of a feeling, though the latter seems to be his doctrine (76-7); but this distinction is, I think, of little importance here. Mr. Sidgwick is perfectly clear on these points that 'Feeling cannot be conceived to exist otherwise than as it is felt—its manner of existence is its being felt' (117). 'The pleasantness of the feeling is a purely subjective fact' (116). We are to 'separate in thought any state of consciousness from all its objective circumstances and conditions . . . and contemplate it merely as the transient feeling of a single subject' (ibid.). 'All pleasures are understood to be so called because they have a common property of pleasantness, and may therefore be compared in respect of this common property' (78). The end is 'the sum of pleasures valued in proportion to their pleasantness' (xi). And from p. 116 we see that pleasantness is the one preferable quality of any state of consciousness when considered as mere feeling.

The end is the pleasantness of pleasant feelings, and the greatest surplus of that to the whole creation, 'the innumerable multitude of living beings, present and to

come' (373). The end is not the pleasant merely; that which is pleasant is only a means to the end and, strictly speaking, nothing is the end but pleasantness, and the maximum surplus of that.

This is the thesis which our author has to maintain, and before I go on to criticize it I should like to point out that we have already got the means of proving something very like it. If we write '*an* end' for '*the* end', and leave out 'maximum surplus', we can demonstrate thus.

Happiness or pleasure is desirable feeling or consciousness, and what is desirable is good or end; therefore pleasure is end or good. And the desirable or good must be reasonable, which means universal or at least objective, hence pleasure is an end as universal or objective, i.e. not as the pleasure of this or that man but as pleasure in general. So far we demonstrate from our definitions. And to prove our whole thesis we may add, Is there anything desirable but conscious life, or even life? But pleasure is that, and that is pleasure. So pleasure is *the* one end. Further, since you cannot distinguish pleasures by quality, you must do it by quantity, and hence maximum of pleasure is the end. Q.E.D.

And the moral of this section is that a good definition saves argument.

#### § 4. *The End*

The end is 'the sum of pleasures valued in proportion to their pleasantness', and we have now to criticize this. For further remarks on the subject I must refer to my *Ethical Studies*, but there are two main points which I cannot pass over; one the possibility of comparing the pleasantness of pleasures, and the other the nature of the greatest sum.

I. And first it would appear that the abstraction of pleasantness from the pleasant, in order to the pursuit of a maximum of the former, is impossible to execute. You cannot abstract and compare so as to arrange the world of pleasant things in an order of quantitative pleasantness.

The question, I take it, is *not* whether by abstraction

you can have a science of quantity in general, nor again whether in particular you are *ever* able to say one feeling is more pleasant than another. There is no dispute between me and Mr. Sidgwick on either of these points. The facts are obvious. The question *is* (1) whether you can compare *all* pleasures in this way, and (2) whether you can compare *any* pleasures, so as to express them as quantities of units of pleasantness, reduced to the same denomination. Can you add and subtract pleasures, and say, 'This lot will be greater, and so much greater, than that lot?'

If you cannot do this latter, if you can only, taking any two pleasures, say, 'One is greater than the other, but can give neither the quantitative relation of one to the other, and still less the quantitative relation of one imagined lot to another lot, what then, I would ask, becomes of the 'calculus', and, with it, of scientific Hedonism? And, secondly, to come to the first point, if it is not true that all pleasures can be compared as degrees of pleasantness, if the ideas of past pleasures are seldom exact copies of the reality, if they are too heterogeneous to be always compared, and if this holds *a fortiori* of pleasures in prospect; if, again, the changing mood of the subject conditions the quantity of pleasantness in a way not always to be calculated;—then once more the 'calculus' is seen to be an impossibility.

It is unnecessary for me to enter on these objections, since partly they speak for themselves, and, in addition, I can refer to Mr. Sidgwick's book (pp. 120–30) for a discussion which in the main confirms them sufficiently. So that when we hear from him (*M. o.s.* ii. 36) that 'we can perfectly well compare a pleasure felt under any given conditions with any other, however otherwise conditioned, and pronounce it equal or unequal; and we surely require no more than this to enable us to take "amount of pleasure" as our standard for deciding between alternatives of conduct', we may content ourselves with remarking that his assertion is not only in direct contradiction with the facts of life, but is also irreconcilable with his own more sober views.



II. And, to come now to the second main head, the 'greatest sum of pleasures' is open to very serious objection.

(i) The cardinal point in my opinion is that the Good must be a whole, and that hence a mere aggregate is not the Good. The true End is not put together out of counted units, but the Hedonistic End is a mere addition of particulars. 'Irrelevant metaphysic' as any such consideration may be for our author, I hold it to be fatal to the greatest-pleasure doctrine in any form.

(ii) The next point is that, if by greatest sum we mean an infinite quantity, then that is a self-contradictory idea, which can indeed be aimed at, but by no possibility can be realized (vide *E.S.* 70, 89 = 76, 97-8).

(iii) Neither in his book nor in his article does our author tell us whether for him the sum is infinite or finite. A definition of happiness<sup>1</sup> (*Methods*, 19) points to the former view, but there is no certainty. If I knew that Mr. Sidgwick held to the infinite sum I would at once leave the matter here, remarking at the same time that he gives no hint of a solution of the problem of approximation to an endless sum.

But I do not suppose our author is prepared to say that the sum is infinite; and, though left in darkness, I must point out some difficulties which meet us when we take it as finite.

We may consider the sum either (*a*) as a series in time of units or groups of units, or (*b*) as a coexisting collection. I will take the series first.

(*a*) If a man is to have an end he can realize, then he must be able to say, It is mine, I possess it. And so with humanity, or the sentient creation generally; if there is a realizable end for them, there must be some time at which this end can be realized. But a sum of successive feelings is not such an end; for these pleasures do not exist as a sum, and to have the sum at any moment is impossible.

<sup>1</sup> The definition of 'greatest happiness' on p. 109 tells us nothing. I think the reader will find (on such a minor point I will not burden him with references) that Mr. Sidgwick is somewhat wavering in his use of the term 'happiness'.

Well but, I shall hear, is it not possible to go through the pleasures to the last, to sum the series, and to say, I have had them all? And have we not here an end which can be realized?

Taking first the case of the individual man, I answer, Yes, doubtless, if you think that a man's end can be realized after he has ceased to be, and that it is enough that some one else, when he is dead, should say, He has summed the series, and attained the end. For myself I hold that a man's end is not realized at all unless during his existence, and that a good which my whole life long I must be without, and which comes to me only with my extinction, is no good for me and not my good at all.

But Mr. Sidgwick does not hold *my* sum of pleasures to be the end. For him the end is the sum of the pleasures of the sentient creation, or, at the least, of humanity. But if this sum is a series in time I do not see how it ever is complete as a collection, so that any one can say humanity has realized the end by having had the sum, and I do not see who is to say it, and in fact I see only that I am using words which to me have no meaning.<sup>1</sup>

(b) Dismissing then the sum as a series, let us take it as a finite coexisting aggregate. Then the end will be that at any time the sentient world should be having the greatest possible quantity of pleasantness. In this case the realization of the *sum* lies open, I think, to no logical objection.

But *greatest possible* sum at once lands us in difficulties. What does it mean? When and in what sense can we say that I and the sentient world are having a greatest possible sum of pleasure?

I suppose the answer must be that the actual is that which under all the conditions was possible. One of these conditions is the direction of our energy towards increase of pleasure, and the total result (if the energy is so directed) we call the greatest possible sum, an end which can logically be realized wholly, and is really gained approximately. And I think, if it is clearly understood that we are dealing,

<sup>1</sup> See more in Appendix, note A.

not with an indefinite, but with a limited sum, that this answer so far may stand.

But if this is Mr. Sidgwick's answer, as perhaps it may be (I can only guess), yet, though it is true that not everything I have urged elsewhere (*E.S.* 89, and note = 97-8) is applicable to our author, since he rejects the Hedonistic determination of the will, for all that we are by no means at the end of our difficulties.

The end is to get as much as we can. The realization of that is the *summum bonum*. If we suppose that, at a given period of the world's history, energy has been so far as was possible directed towards gaining pleasure, then the *summum bonum* is now realized, whatever the amount of the pleasure gained. Perfect virtue thus is and must be perfect happiness, and every failure to get perfect happiness is so much vice in oneself or others. An edifying conclusion, if reached by a somewhat strange road. But Hedonism, if it accepts this result, collides at once with ordinary notions of happiness. To say, If all had done and did their duty we should all be perfectly happy, no matter how small our surplus of pleasure—happiness at the next moment may be increased or diminished, but if all do their duty, the greatest possible sum of pleasures is at every moment realized, whatever be the fractional surplus of pleasure over pain—is surely a somewhat paradoxical assertion. But if we refuse to accept this hypothetical conclusion, then we fall back upon the unlimited quantity.

I have shown elsewhere (*E.S.* 95 note = 104) that it will not help us if we take mere increase of pleasure as the end; and our result so far is that, even if the common Hedonistic psychology be dropped, and the end be taken neither as an infinite sum, nor as a successive series which must be summed before it is realized, we are in sharp collision with ordinary notions, though not at present in contradiction with ourselves.

But if we keep to Mr. Sidgwick, it seems to me that we shall have to contradict ourselves. He has not merely rejected the Hedonistic determination of the will, but has betaken himself to 'Freedom'. What he means by Free Will

he has (as usual) not told us; yet, so far as we can see, in the sphere in which it holds it is the same as pure chance.

If this is so we are at once in trouble. The realization of the greatest possible sum had a meaning when we could say, Here was a complex of conditions, concurring causes (or whatever else you like to call them), and this, which is actual, is the greatest possible result from that complex. The actual is what was possible. But when Free Will is brought in can we say this any longer? In the complication we are considering, acts of will are an element, and if (as I understand our author does) you decline to say, This result which did follow *must* have followed, then you leave a reserve of possibility in the will, and the actual no longer is all that was possible. Hence 'greatest possible sum' becomes a phrase without meaning. You never can say we have got that, because pure chance is admitted into the matter, and there is no telling that the wills of the agents might not, under all the conditions, have produced something else and something more; nor do I see how any exact limit can be put to the quantity of their action. Greatest possible actuality ceases in short to have a meaning when pure chance is once let in. It is a fiction, and a fiction is not an end which you can realize either wholly or, I think, approximately.

And here I will leave the subject. It would be an endless task to attempt to anticipate every sense in which the sum of pleasures can be taken, and it is probable that much of the above may be beside the mark. It is hard to discuss a man's opinions when you do not know what they are; and if our author has ever asked himself the meaning of 'the sum', he has at present not imparted his answer to the public.

The questions which call for a discussion are these. Is the sum limited or unlimited? If limited, is it to be taken as a series or as a coexisting aggregate? If the latter, what is the exact meaning of greatest possible sum? If it is to be considered as a series, has not the series to be completed before it is realized? And, if so, when and how is it completed? Is the end mere approximation? and again, Can

you be said to approximate to the impossible? Is once more the sum infinite? And, if it is so, is it not a fiction? No Hedonist, I think, can fairly refuse to enter on these questions; and then there remains the 'irrelevant' metaphysic, which I do not ask Mr. Sidgwick but do ask the reader to consider, Is not the end a whole, and, if so, can it be a mere collection or aggregate or series?

And now after this wearisome discussion, for the length of which I do not think that I am responsible, let us leave the criticism of the 'greatest sum of pleasures' and try to see how this sum can be a 'real end of Reason'. We did not get very clear on Reason, and so must not wonder if this point too remains somewhat obscure. Does Reason give the mere abstraction of pleasure in general? Then pleasure of others and amount of pleasure both fall outside it. Does it give us the intuition of a collection of pleasures without reference to this or that subject, and is 'so great' or 'greatest' included in this intuition? That does seem a great deal to ask of Reason. And then is the intuition universal or individual? Does, once more, Reason not give the end at all but only qualify it? Is both 'pleasure' and 'sum of pleasures' given as the end apart from Reason, and does the latter merely add 'objective' to this ready-made end? Then, as we have said, the end is hardly the 'end of Reason'. Does, again, an intuition of Reason tell me that my greatest sum of pleasure is the end, but tell me at the same time that my end is 'objective' and the same for all subjects? Perhaps. I cannot say.

But what is meant by the objectivity of the end? In one sense it is not 'objective', because all pleasures are merely subjective. Nor in another sense is it 'objective', because it ought to be and therefore is not.<sup>1</sup> It seems to be objective in the following sense. We get somehow the notion

<sup>1</sup> There are some noticeable sayings on the opposition of 'ought' and 'is' on pp. 3, 92, 94. If Mr. Sidgwick had not qualified this statement on p. 5, he could hardly have avoided the conclusion, Nothing which is, ought to be, and might even be taken to hold, Whatever is not, ought to be. I do not think this is a mere matter of verbal accuracy.

of pleasure and greatest sum of pleasures as the end of our being, and, whether reason comes in or is there already, the result of reason is that the end is objective and right. And objective seems to mean this. Strip from sum of pleasures all reference to myself, and it ceases to be *my* pleasure. Strip from its pursuit all reference to any one in particular, and it is a pursuit for no one in particular, and that means (*how?*) what is imperative on all alike. I cannot venture to assert that this is our author's doctrine, and so will not risk a mistaken and wasted criticism. All I will say is that, *if* this is his doctrine, then 'objective'<sup>1</sup> means 'abstract', and, with the abstraction from the desiring and willing individual, there is no more possibility of the objective being a goal to all, or imperative on any one. If it is not the end of any one in particular, then it is not the end in general or at all.

The question of the 'reasonable' as 'objective' will return on us when we try to understand Mr. Sidgwick's view of ethical science. But now we have partly realized the doubtful nature of our terms, and seen some of the psychological and metaphysical difficulties which beset our main thesis, it is time to ask, What proof have we got that it is true? How are we to show that the greatest surplus of units of pleasantness is the end?

## PART II. THE ARGUMENT

### § 5. *The Intuition*<sup>2</sup>

We have seen what the Hedonistic end is, and we have now to prove that this is not merely *an* end but *the* end, that nothing else whatever is strictly speaking an end at all.

The method is simple. First, we show that nothing is ultimately good unless it enters into relation to conscious-

<sup>1</sup> I have been forced to ask myself the question what 'objective' means in *The Methods of Ethics*; but as it is not *necessary* for the reader to follow this inquiry, I have printed it in the Appendix (note B).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this I presuppose in the reader an acquaintance with the chapter on the 'Summum Bonum'.

ness of some kind. Then we separate what is left into 'objective' and 'subjective', and finding the former is not the end, we lastly put the 'subjective' as the end and accept that.

Against the first step I have nothing to say, provided that consciousness is taken to mean (as we have seen it does mean) life, or mind in the widest sense. But against the rest of the proof I will make at once two preliminary objections.

(i) It must be shown (not asserted) that the alternative of objective and subjective is tenable. Failing this, the proof goes. (ii) It is a logical error to argue, Because A is not desirable without B, therefore B by itself is desirable; or again, Because  $A + B$  and B (by itself) are both desirable, therefore nothing but B is desirable. In other words, however correct it is, having both A and B isolated, to say B is better than A, and A is not worth having, yet you cannot possibly go from that to, Therefore B is as good as A and B together, and B is the only good. We shall see the application of this directly.

To proceed. We accept the first proposition that consciousness (= life) is the end of life; but we at once demur to the alternative of subjective and objective. We say, first, that this is a false alternative, and next, that it does not carry the required conclusion. What our author has to show is not merely that pleasure is *a* good or a *better* good, but that it is *the* good and the *only* good.

To the falseness of the alternative we shall return, but first of all we shall take the question (as we have a right to do), Apart from alternatives is pleasure for pleasure's sake the good? Is it even by itself good or desirable at all?

The appeal I understand to be 'to the intuitive judgement of each reader' (371). In what sense it is to his intuitive reason I hardly know.

We know what the Hedonistic end is. It is 'the sum of pleasures valued in proportion to their pleasantness'. It is in short Pleasantness as the one end, all else as means. And now I ask the reader to put this before himself as a moral agent, and say not Do I like it?, but Is it the end of

my being, the ultimate good, the real end of Reason? Is it for me and for others the one thing worth having for itself?

That I submit is the only fair way to put the issue. How does Mr. Sidgwick put it?

'But now, when we have so far limited the application of the notion Good to conscious life, it may seem that our result is really identical with what we call Happiness. For Happiness was explained to be preferable or desirable feeling or consciousness; and if we say that all other things called good are only means to the end of making conscious life intrinsically better or more desirable, is not this saying that they are means to the end of happiness?' (369).

Now I think the reader will see why we spent so much time over 'desirable' and 'consciousness'. But it is not fair to Mr. Sidgwick to stop here. The passage goes on,

'On the other hand, it seems clear that in ordinary thought consciousness, active and passive, is conceived to be preferable on other grounds than its pleasantness.'

Our author now proceeds to the alternative we shall discuss hereafter, and puts the question, Are mere 'objects' desirable?

'But can this, on reflection, be maintained? It seems to me that it certainly cannot. Here I can only appeal to the intuitive judgment of each reader, when the question is fairly placed before it. For my own part, if I have any intuition at all respecting the ultimate ends of action, it seems to me that I can see this: that these objective relations of the conscious subject, when distinguished in reflective analysis from the consciousness accompanying and resulting from them, are not ultimately and intrinsically desirable: any more than material or other objects are, when considered out of relation to conscious existence altogether. Admitting that we have actual experience of such preferences as have just been described, of which the ultimate object is something that is not Feeling: it still seems to me that when such objects are conceived to come, not apparently or transiently, but really and finally, into competition with Happiness, we cannot maintain the rationality of such preferences' (371-2).

All I shall say at present on this passage is that it plainly does not carry the required conclusion, i.e. 'a mere pursuit



of universal happiness'. Admit every word of it, and yet it gives us no right to say the end is nothing but the subjective. 'Better' does not = 'the only thing good'. Nor again by showing that an element by itself is not *the* end or *an* end can you prove that it is *nothing but* a means.

After accounting for the aversion 'we find in Common Sense' 'to admit Happiness (when explained to mean a sum of pleasures) to be the sole ultimate end and standard of right conduct'; and after again defining Pleasure as 'Preferable or Desirable Feeling of whatever kind' (372), where the reader will not forget the ambiguity of the terms, the Hedonistic end is once more presented to us for our acceptance.

'But Universal Happiness, desirable conscious life for the innumerable multitude of living beings, present and to come, seems an End that satisfies our imagination by its vastness, and sustains our resolution by its comparative permanence and security' (373).

I am very far from accusing Mr. Sidgwick of intentional unfairness. But I must leave it to the reader to judge whether this is the right way to put the question. 'The ambiguity (for a time removed), as at the beginning (369), so now at the end wraps the issue in a cloud. No one, I am sure, who himself kept the problem in view could state it in such a way; and the crowning phrase 'desirable conscious life' combines *petitio principii* with *ignoratio elenchi* after a manner not easy to parallel. The thesis to be proved is that mere pleasure is the end. Mr. Sidgwick writes conscious life for pleasure, and adds desirable (which *means* end) to the definition.

Whether our author feels secure in the position which so far he has taken I can hardly tell. At all events he does not remain there, but moves to what he evidently considers the decisive point.

'If we simplify the question by supposing only a single sentient conscious being in the universe, it then is surely evident that nothing can be ultimately "good" for such a being except his own happiness' (374; cf. 378, 360, 392 note).

Mr. Sidgwick, as I understand, appeals here to 'Common

Sense', and I am quite ready to go before that tribunal; but first there are one or two questions to be asked. *Can* we so 'simplify the question'? Have we a *right* so to simplify it? And on our author's theory *do* we simplify it so?

(i) The supposition of one finite conscious being in a material universe, which Mr. Sidgwick introduces so modestly, is an utter impossibility, not only according to at least one half of philosophical theory, but also according to current religious belief.

(ii) It is simple dogmatic individualism to assume that the end for all is the mere multiple of the end for one, which therefore can be found by isolating a unit. Here again we must say that an author has a right to make what assumptions he pleases, but surely not to introduce them tacitly.

(iii) The supposition is so far from simplifying the question that it at once involves Mr. Sidgwick in contradiction with himself. 'The words 'ultimately and intrinsically good or desirable' (392 note) mean the same as 'objectively good' or 'reasonable'. But this was valid not for one individual as such, but was 'the same for all minds'. Is it not then a contradiction, given but one conscious individual, that his end should be objective? But, if not objective, then not ultimately good.

But if this does not hold, and if one individual may consider *his* pleasure to be objectively desirable, then the argument against egoism (see below) will be shaken if not destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

The only way that I see out of this dilemma is to suppose the single sentient to have an intuition of Reason, which tells him that pleasure in general or in the abstract is the end of his being: whereon he proceeds dutifully to pursue *his own* pleasure simply for the sake of pleasure in general. But I do not understand Mr. Sidgwick to maintain this.

<sup>1</sup> Notice on p. 374 the wavering view of the reasonable, according to which one's 'own happiness seems to be a rational ultimate end'. This will meet us again.

Now I think if we pleased we should after this have a right to refuse to go before 'Common Sense' with Mr. Sidgwick's supposition. Nevertheless we will not refuse. Figure yourself then, reader—your imagination, not like mine, may keep pace with our author's—figure yourself as a single sentient being in a non-sentient universe, and tell us, would you not believe in 'a real end of Reason, the absolutely Good or Desirable'? Would you not say, I can reach my end; there *is* something I *ought* to live for, and that is my pleasure?

The reader must answer the question, for I confess my fancy is too weak to realize the position. So far as I can do so, I answer it in the negative.

And now that we have put the Hedonistic end, let us look at the alternative, the true alternative, which involves no 'hypothesis unverifiable by experience'. But we must come to this through two one-sided statements of the issue:—

(i) Let us first understand by the 'objective' end something out of relation to the mind. Is this the end? I think we may say it is not.

(ii) Next let us suppose (I think this is what Mr. Sidgwick means) certain relations of our wills to other wills or, more generally, certain relations of our minds to something not our minds (371, 375), and this in entire abstraction from pleasure. Let us distinguish these 'in reflective analysis' from all feeling, and ask, Is function, apart from pleasure, a human end?

Elsewhere I said Yes to this question. I think that was rash. I can say neither Yes nor No, for I am sure now that I cannot perform the analysis required so as to bring the residuum before me practically. When I try to think what I should be like without pleasure or pain, I can find no certain result. Abstracting from these, I find the relation of my will to the universal will to be so unreal an abstraction that the words mean nothing at all, or, at least, nothing practical. I must leave the reader to answer the question for himself; and, so far as my views are

concerned, he is most welcome to answer it in the negative.<sup>1</sup>

But there is another way of putting it which I think *is* intelligible. Given maintenance or heightening of function on one side with the same or less pleasure: given on the other side lowering of function in qualitative excellence (I have said elsewhere what I mean by these words) with the same or more pleasure—which is your end? Not which would you like best, but which *ought* you to take? Given even (for argument's sake) the possibility or cer-

<sup>1</sup> In *M. o.s.* ii. 36 Mr. Sidgwick says, 'He (the Hedonist) is only concerned to maintain that, when in a mood of calm reflection we distinguish these ideal objects (such as the pursuit of truth, &c.) from the feelings inseparably connected with them, it is the quality of these latter which we see to be the ultimate end of rational desire.' The passage illustrates well our author's loose terminology. It is much the same statement as we quoted on p. 92 from *Methods*, 371-2. There we had 'consciousness', and here 'quality of feelings'. I will try to define the issue.

(1) Does Mr. Sidgwick mean by *quality of feelings* the mere pleasantness of them, entirely distinct from every other quality they possess? If not, his conclusion disappears.

(2) Does he mean that in the pursuit of truth, &c., we can distinguish, first the feelings from the activities, and then, next, the pleasantness of the feelings from their other qualities, and bring these things severally before our minds as distinct objects of choice? If not, once more his conclusion vanishes.

For that conclusion it is necessary that, taking the idea (e.g.) of the pursuit of truth, I should be able to separate in my mind, first, the feelings from the activities, and, next, the bare pleasantness of the feelings from every other quality they have, in such a way as to be able to contemplate, as several objects, first this mere pleasantness, and then the residue of feeling and activity; and to be able to say the element of pleasantness is the one end, and all the rest is not an end at all, nor goes to make the end an end, but is a bare means or accompaniment.

I do not believe that any one can perform this operation: and for myself, so far as I can make any approach to such a choice, it does not appear to me that the pleasantness, in its abstraction, is even *an* end. Still less does it appear that it is *the* end, and that all the rest of the feeling and activity is a bare accompaniment or means. But the reader must judge for himself.

The alleged fact that we can compare all pleasant things in respect of the amount of their pleasantness, does not show (as Mr. Sidgwick seems to think it does) that we can put bare pleasantness on one side, and everything else on the other, and, bringing these as several objects before the mind, make our choice between them. And besides, the alleged fact is contrary to experience (see above, pp. 83-4).

tainty that what we call progress might entail, not mere loss of pleasure, but actually a less amount of pleasure than pain to the creation or to humanity—which is the *right* course? Hedonism tells us (this follows from p. 384) that progress is here an absolute evil, because the surplus counts and the surplus is pain. The issue, I think, is fair and tolerably intelligible, and I will leave it to the reader. Hedonism falls if the question is answered in the way I answer it.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) But I deny the right of any one to compel us to such a choice, unless he first proves against us what Mr. Sidgwick does not attempt to prove, nor even asserts. We do not separate 'objective' and 'subjective': we do not say, *Virtue or pleasure*, and *Pleasure or virtue*: we say *both*. The true issue is *virtue + pleasure as the end*, against *mere pleasure as the end*. To say, *Function is the end*, is by no means to say, *Pleasure is not good*. It is to say, *Pleasure is an inseparable element in the human end*, and in that sense is necessarily included in the end; and higher life implies pleasure for the reason that life without pleasure is inconceivable. What we hold to against every possible modification of Hedonism is that the standard and test is in higher and lower function, not in more or less pleasure. *If* any one can prove that higher life means less or no surplus of pleasure, *then* he can fairly ask us to face the alternative. We are ready to do this, but against Mr. Sidgwick we certainly need not do so unless we please.

I have been forced to repeat a good deal of that which I have said elsewhere: it would be little more than a similar repetition did I enter on the remaining difficulties of the chapter; and as Mr. Sidgwick (in his article on Hedonism<sup>2</sup>) brought forward nothing against the doctrine I advanced, I must consider that it stands. The result of this section, in my judgement, is that our author has not shown the greatest surplus of pleasure to be *the* end, or even an end at all.

<sup>1</sup> In the passage quoted from *M. o.s. ii. 36* Mr. Sidgwick appears to deny this; but I may not understand him rightly.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hedonism and Ultimate Good', *M. o.s. ii. 27-38*.

### § 6. *Unconscious Hedonism*

The latter part of the foregoing section has, I think, removed by anticipation the argument from the latent or unconscious Hedonism of common morality. Indeed, as an independent proof this seems to have no weight at all. To go through the virtues and to show that they all bring pleasure establishes the thesis, Virtue in general is pleasant, and it establishes no more. To conclude from Virtue is pleasant to Pleasure is the end and virtue merely the means is surely a logical leap of some width. If you could show (and Mr. Sidgwick has not done so) that the greatest surplus of pleasure comes from what we call virtue, i.e. that no other way of life we call not-virtuous could have produced a greater, even then you have not proved one step towards the Hedonistic thesis. The argument may hold against asceticism; that is for the ascetic to dispute. Against us it does not hold. If the end is the fullest life for each with the most harmonious life for all, the most harmonious life for each with the fullest life for all, it is not very hard to see why virtue should in general be pleasant, nor need it stagger us to be told (though neither we nor Mr. Sidgwick affirm this) that what we call the most virtuous life is, when the whole is considered, also the most pleasant. I am unable to see how, if this is so, it goes to show either that one element of the whole is the end and the other nothing but a means, or even that the element of pleasure is to be used as the criterion for the element of virtue. The reason for placing the criterion in function rather than pleasure (even on the hypothesis that greatest pleasure must coincide on the whole with highest function) is that the function is definite and the pleasure indefinite. I have stated these points elsewhere, and Mr. Sidgwick has advanced nothing against them.

### § 7. *The Suppression of Egoism*

We come now to one of the most characteristic parts of *The Methods of Ethics*. It is always interesting to study the position of the Hedonist towards Egoism, particularly to

those who, like myself, feel sure that consistent Hedonism must be egoistic. We will first see what Mr. Sidgwick's attitude towards Egoism is, and then try to understand the reason of it.

Our author's Egoist is the man who pursues the maximum of his own pleasure; and since, as we have seen, right and wrong are 'objective', and reason apprehends the universal, it is natural to think that for Mr. Sidgwick it would have been plain at once that egoism and morality are irreconcilable, and that to show this by 'argument' was not only superfluous but impossible.

No doubt there is a method of arguing with the Egoist in the sense of the man who takes his self for his end. Argument is possible as to the nature of the self; and the Egoist may be convinced, perhaps, that he has made a mistake. But in Mr. Sidgwick we find no hint of the kind, and indeed anything of the sort would be for him, I suppose, an 'hypothesis unverifiable by experience'.

Failing this, I should have said the only course left was to call attention to the immorality and 'irrationality' of Egoism, and so leave it. Mr. Sidgwick does not do this: he approaches the Egoist with 'argument' (391, 392 note) or 'proof' (461). And in this 'argument', which I have done my best to understand, I can see no more than one or two tautologies.

We have first two 'self-evident truths', of which each seems to be 'an indubitable intuition of the practical Reason' (371; cf. 470). These are the Rule of Equity and the Rule of Benevolence.

The first is 'Whatever I judge reasonable or unreasonable that another should do for me: that by the same judgement I declare reasonable or unreasonable that I should *in the like case* do for him' (358).

With all due respect for our author's opinion, this Rule seems to me to be a pure tautology. The right, the objective, the reasonable, is, by the definition, what holds in abstraction from 'the mere fact that I and he are different individuals' (358) or 'the mere individuality of different individuals' (183 note) or again 'the mere fact that *he is*

*he'* (391). The meaning of 'reasonable' is what holds in abstraction from the individual, and hence is the same in all individuals. If we really wish to be 'reasonable' we must write X for 'me' and 'him', these being unreasonable distinctions, and then the Rule is, Whatever X judges reasonable or unreasonable that X should do for X: that by the same judgement X declares reasonable or unreasonable that X should *in the like case* do for X. That, as soon as we know that reasonable = universal, is surely a bare tautology.

The second Rule, without any doubt 'an indubitable intuition of the practical Reason' (371; cf. 468, 470, 472), is the Rule of Benevolence.

'Here we are supposed to judge that there is something intrinsically desirable—some result which it would be reasonable for each individual to seek for himself if he considered himself alone. Let us call this the individual's Good or Welfare: then what Clarke urges is, that the Good of any one individual cannot be *more* intrinsically desirable, *because it is his*, than the equal Good of any other individual' (360).

'I cannot regard the fulfilment of my desires, or my own happiness, as intrinsically more desirable (or more to be regarded by me as a rational end) than the equal happiness of any one else' (364).

Mr. Sidgwick proceeds:—

'But now, of these two propositions, the first is a necessary postulate of *all* ethical systems, being an expression of what is involved in the mere conception of objective rightness and wrongness in conduct, while the second is the fundamental principle of that particular system which (in Book I) we called Utilitarianism.'

The first of these propositions, I remark, is not an expression of what is involved but of what is explicitly stated in 'objective rightness'; and here again in the second the phrases 'desirable' and 'rational end' postulate abstraction from 'the individuality of the individual'. In respect of the rules we have no right to distinguish one individual from another, and this second proposition comes to no more than 'X cannot regard his own happiness as more



desirable than the equal happiness of X', which seems to me either tautological or nonsensical.<sup>1</sup>

As Mr. Sidgwick says, 'This seems to be as much a self-evident truth as the principle of Equity' (360). I agree with him on this point. My objection is that it is *self-evident* in the sense of having the self-same subject and predicate, and that, in short, in a different form it is the tautology we had before.<sup>2</sup>

We think then that our author not only 'may seem to have laboriously executed one of those circles in reasoning before noticed' (366), but certainly has done so: and when he proceeds, 'We seem to have done nothing; and in fact we have only evolved the suppression of Egoism, the necessary universality of view, which is implied in the mere form of the objective judgement "that an end is good", just as it is in the judgement "that an action is right"'—it is impossible for us not to answer, You really have done nothing, and have 'evolved' nothing but that which long ago you explicitly postulated.

So far our only way with the Egoist has been to reiterate the postulates which he denies, and if the argument is to proceed we must do more. We must make him accept them, and on paper it is but to ask and to have. 'The Egoistic Hedonist, who holds that absolutely nothing but his subjective pleasure is the end, advances 'the proposition that his happiness or pleasure is objectively desirable' (391), and having thus admitted that his own doctrine is

<sup>1</sup> In plain words, these rules are, What is good for X is good for X, and what is right for X is right for X. They cannot mean, What is good and right for *one* X is so for *another* and a *different* X. Right and good are the same for each, and each is the same for right and good. The 'difference' Mr. Sidgwick supposes to be constituted by 'individuality' falls outside the 'universal' and 'objective'. In saying 'reasonable' we postulate indifference to 'the individuality of the individuals', and hence the words 'one' and 'other' are irrelevant. By introducing them you mean to add nothing to the universal at all, or, if you do, you flatly contradict our author's view of 'objective rightness'.

<sup>2</sup> It ceases to be a tautology only if it postulates absolutely that pleasure is *an* end or *the* end. Then it becomes a mere assumption and, if any argument is meant, a glaring *petitio*. But I do not understand Mr. Sidgwick to put it forward in the above sense.

false, naturally is at once confuted and ignominiously suppressed.

It is hard to discuss this matter with gravity. I will merely remark that the Egoistic Hedonist who could admit the above proposition would show that he simply did not know what he was saying. 'Objectively desirable' means desirable *not* for me in particular, and the Hedonistic Egoist is the man he is by holding that *nothing* is 'objectively desirable'.

He would laugh if you said to him of his happiness that 'the mere fact (if I may so put it) that *he is he* can have nothing to do with its objective desirability or goodness' (391). 'I pursue my pleasure, my dear Sir, not because I am I, nor for the sake of any other tautology, but because I feel it and like it, while yours I can neither feel nor like.' Would not this be his answer to our author's 'argument'? And Mr. Sidgwick fully admits that argument is here of no avail (391).<sup>1</sup>

But let us turn to the more interesting question, what has led our author into this position against Egoistic Hedonism. The answer is in a word that Mr. Sidgwick dares not break entirely with this view for fear his own ground should give way beneath him. He not only, as we shall see hereafter, has doubts whether Egoism be not 'reasonable'; but, if his own thesis is to stand, it is of the last importance that Egoistic Hedonism should *not* be suppressed wholly. His tactics (I use the word in no offensive sense) are, standing on Egoistic Hedonism to

<sup>1</sup> But even here he makes the Egoist say 'that he ought to take his own happiness or pleasure as his ultimate end'. This too is surely inaccurate. 'Ought' for Hedonistic Egoism refers only to the means. Cf. *E.S.* 116 = 127-8. On the whole subject of Egoism, as treated by Mr. Sidgwick, I have failed to find a consistent view. He not only (374) allows that Egoism is reasonable, but on p. 391, when he formulates the Egoistic first principle in two ways, and says that against the second the 'proof' holds, while against the first (as just quoted) it does not, I cannot see the vital distinction. If 'ought' = 'reasonable' (80 note), and 'right' = 'reasonable', and is 'the same, whether recognized or not, for all Minds or Subjects' (182), surely the moment the Egoist says he *ought* to take the end he does, he contradicts himself, and the proof holds just as much as when he says his happiness or pleasure is 'objectively desirable' or good. Where is the difference?

universalize that into Utilitarianism. Of *my pleasure* he wants to keep one part (pleasure) and drop only the *my*. And to do this the Egoist must be won over—hence the ‘argument’. But even if the Egoist (should) become an ally, I think this movement cannot be executed in the face of an enemy. What it comes to is, as I have said elsewhere, Take from Egoistic Hedonism pleasure as the end, take from morality the ‘universal’ and the ‘reasonable’, and then argue, *My pleasure* is not a reasonable end, pleasure in general is not mine, therefore pleasure in general is a reasonable end. This of course is futile; and the only way left to separate the ‘my’ from ‘pleasure’ is to postulate in a single sentient an intuition of my pleasure as pleasure in general, which seems to be an untenable position (I cannot say if it is our author’s). It naturally leads to the doctrine that the ‘my’ and ‘your’ are an illusion, and that mine when viewed under the light of reason is the same as yours.<sup>1</sup> This result (substantially the same as Schopenhauer’s) could I think be deduced from our author’s doctrine of the ‘reasonable’, but, apart from the objections we entertain to the premises, the strict result would seem to be that not only the differences of ‘you’ and ‘me’ are illusory because irrational, but that also, and on the same ground, pain and pleasure are both illusions.

In our last section we shall come once more upon Egoism, but now we must turn to Mr. Sidgwick’s view of

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find it instructive here to develop a doctrine of non-hedonistic Egoism. Suppose the law of the universe by which it progresses to be the struggle for existence, the reckless self-assertion of each against all. Suppose that the individuals are aware of this law, then is it not both the ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ end of the individual to assert himself against all to the uttermost? By making himself his sole end, is he not fulfilling the objective end, the intrinsically desirable, &c.? Against this position (not mine) what form would Mr. Sidgwick’s ‘reasonable’ take? The fact that I am I, if I have most force, is a vital difference to the end of the universe, and to get that end by getting the strongest to the front, there is (*ex hypothesi*) but one course, that we should struggle recklessly. I do not know whether any enthusiastic follower of Mr. Darwin has clearly developed this view. It is much to be wished that some one would. If the reader will carry it out for himself and bring it into collision with our author’s ‘argument’ against Egoism, I think he will find that it throws light on the subject.

Ethical Science, which seems vitally connected with his doctrine of Reason.

### PART III

#### § 8. *Mr. Sidgwick's view of Ethical Science*

Ethical Science does not yet exist; but it is possible. What is its nature? 'The end we know. The study of the means to the end is Eudemonics. This, plus 'the acceptance of the end as absolutely prescribed', is Ethics (8). It treats of the ideal to be realized and the actions which are to realize it. Hence 'its affirmations are also precepts' (2, 3).

'The science of Ethics, therefore, necessarily treats of action which to a great extent *is* not: action therefore which (we may say) *ought*<sup>1</sup> to be! Its affirmations are also precepts: indeed if it were not so, the distinction just drawn between Ethics and Psychology would vanish' (3).

The end, as was said before, we know. The means are the actions of men.

The object or scope of the 'science' is practical. It is to direct us to 'externally and objectively right' conduct (381). It is to tell us what to do, not merely in general, but in particular. It is to be no mere outline but a scientific code.

'For instinct varies and is uncertain, and sometimes gives no clear guidance at all: and yet we are convinced that the right course must be the same for all, and ought to be determined upon universal principles; and it is for these that men appeal to the moralist' (217).

'Its aim is rather to show a natural transition from the Morality of Common Sense to Utilitarianism, somewhat like the transition in special branches of practice from trained instinct and empirical rules to the technical method that embodies and applies the conclusions of science: so that Utilitarianism may appear only as the scientifically complete and systematically reflective form of that regulation of conduct, which through the whole course of human

<sup>1</sup> We have already noticed that this view of 'ought' is open to serious criticism. A minor point would be the question whether 'science' is the proper term to use.

history has always tended substantially in the same direction' (395-6). 'In the more technical parts of practice we prefer the judgment of a few trained experts to the instincts of the vulgar' (434).

In one word we are to have a system of Casuistry.

'For if the particular case can be satisfactorily settled by conscience without reference to general rules, "Casuistry", which consists in the application of general rules to particular cases, is clearly superfluous. But then, on this view, we shall have no practical need of any such general rules, or of a science of Ethics at all' (85; cf. 295, *sub fin.*). And 'we study Ethics . . . for the sake of Practice' (191).

May the rules of this system collide? Certainly not.

'In order to have a complete theory of Ethics, we require not only to make our maxims perfectly precise, but also to systematize them completely, in order that no collision of precepts may remain possible' (200). 'Such a collision is absolute proof that at least one of the formulae needs qualification' (320). 'In conclusion, then, we must admit that while we find a number of broad and more or less indefinite rules unhesitatingly laid down by Common Sense in this department of duty, it is difficult or impossible to state even the most certain of these with such clearness and precision as would enable us to determine exactly the extent of duty in any case. And yet, as we saw, such exactness seems to be required for the perfection of practice no less than for theoretical completeness, in so far as those duties are liable to come into apparent conflict with each other, and with other prescriptions of the moral code' (235; cf. 388).

For an act to be right we see it must come under one head or clause of the code, and that this cannot be at variance with any other.

'One may hold that duty varies with the individual and is so far relative, and yet maintain that it varies on rational grounds, capable of being explained, systematized, and reduced to principles' (6; cf. 377 *sub fin.*).

Briefly then, we see, Mr. Sidgwick's conception of Ethics is wholly jurial.

It is at this point that an interesting question, the relation of morality to law, is opened. My knowledge of the subject, I am sorry to say, even did space permit, would not enable me to enter on it. I do not know how far, as

a matter of fact, any code of law can be made so systematic as not to contradict itself. But there are two obvious points which present themselves here. First, no modern code makes the smallest attempt to regulate our whole life in accordance with a leading principle. And secondly, a most important point, all law abstracts and must abstract, while morality may not do so. In morals we take a case and we ask, Is this morally right or wrong, and how far? Here we can refuse to consider no single item of the whole complication. The previous life of the man, his difference from other men, the combination of circumstances in its general character and then in its relation to *this* man, all have to be admitted in a moral judgement. You cannot say 'such and such an act is wrong, and wrong to such an extent', and then bring the man under the law as such and such a case of criminality. But, on the other hand, is not law obliged to do this? Is it not from its very nature compelled to keep to the 'universal' and to treat the whole case as an abstraction, i.e. as a *mere* instance of the law, which the case really *never* is? Is not the best administered and best law possible compelled either to leave such liberty to the administrator that practically it ceases to be law, or else obliged seldom quite to coincide with morality, and too often to come into a collision with it, which, though unavoidable, is none the less painful?<sup>1</sup> I submit these questions to the judgement of the reader, and if we are obliged to answer them in the affirmative, then I would put one more question, Does not this nature of law raise a strong presumption against the jural view of Ethics?

Turning now to the question of a moral code we see an alternative awaits us. Either you are prepared to give up your code at a certain point, or else you must attempt to get every possible complication within its clauses.

To accept the former is to throw the code over. Ethics is no longer 'a complete method for determining right

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that Law can never try to judge the whole case morally; but I think I am right in supposing that it does not do so except in considering the amount of punishment, and again of damages in civil (are they really civil?) actions of a certain sort.

conduct' (217). Our judgement is no more 'a systematic deduction from rules' (85). And even then we are left with the question, Do not the rules collide? The opinion which I have put forward elsewhere is that they both do and must.

But I understand our author to accept the second proposition. All complications, I understand him to say, are to be anticipated in the code, or at least so provided for there that the act will come without collision under some one head.<sup>1</sup>

What we are going to try to show is that this attempt to get every qualification inside the code leaves in the end *nothing* outside, so that the objective criterion becomes merely subjective, and will justify *any* action whatever. In short, just as in metaphysic we see abstract individualism and abstract universalism turn round the one into the other, just as in Kant's Practical Philosophy the categorical imperative covered in the end anything or nothing, so in our author's Hedonistic casuistry we shall find that 'objective rightness', just because he has made it *so* objective, becomes in fact merely subjective. It is an old story that extremes meet, and Mr. Sidgwick has illustrated it once more.

'One may hold that duty varies with the individual and is so far relative, and yet maintain that it varies on rational grounds, capable of being explained, systematized, and reduced to principles. So much relativity, indeed, is admitted to some extent in all moral systems. But if it be maintained that two men may act in two different ways under circumstances precisely similar, and yet neither be wrong because each thinks himself right: then the common notion of morality must be rejected as a chimera. That there is in any given circumstances some one thing which ought to be done and that this can be known, is a fundamental assumption, made not by philo-

<sup>1</sup> The teaching that we should act sometimes on impulse, the 'self-limiting' power of Reason (323-4), together with what is said as to tact (202; cf. 206), merely means, I think, that we in our practice may find the clause best sometimes by not thinking of it. That the *moralist* not only may, but must, draw his code so as to exhibit every right act as a deduction from it, will be seen from the passages quoted and referred to above to be Mr. Sidgwick's doctrine.

sophers only, but by all men who perform any processes of moral reasoning' (6).

That there is some *one* thing right is false, if ever in any circumstances there can be two courses *either* of which is right. Certainly common opinion holds that this is possible, and how on Mr. Sidgwick's view it is impossible that two courses might equally conduce to the greatest surplus I cannot see. But if this is so, then the proposition 'that two men', &c., must be reconsidered.

This is not perhaps an important point, but it is as well not to set down at the beginning an inaccurate statement as a 'fundamental assumption'.

To proceed, at all events 'Right and Wrong are really objective: that is, the same, whether recognized or not, for all Minds or Subjects' (182-3). But what does this mean? That what is right for you must be right for me? No.

'If then I assert any action to be right, I imply that it would be right for any other person in my circumstances: or (for obviously that the circumstances are *my* circumstances cannot make it right) for all persons in precisely similar circumstances' (183).

This sounds well; and hearing further 'that the rightness at any rate of *most* actions is altered by a *material* alteration of circumstances', we naturally now want to know what circumstances may be 'material'. Some of these we shall see hereafter, but we find a decided answer to the general question in the note to the above page.

'It should be observed that difference of circumstances must be taken to include difference of nature and character—in short all differences beyond the mere individuality of different individuals.'

So much is certain. But what is 'the mere individuality of different individuals'? Ah, that is the sort of question no modest inquirer tries to answer. We keep to experience, and use these categories so far as for his practical purposes every one must. To ask what they mean, what *we* mean when we use them, would it not be to discuss 'hypotheses unverifiable by experience'? Indeed, in too many cases I think so; or shall we say not 'unverifiable by experience', but there most verifiable as the fictions of a one-sided theory?



We must take it, I suppose, that this 'mere individuality' is what you have left after you have got a variety of men and abstracted all the differences of nature and character. The residue of myself, after my nature and character are removed, is my individuality.

Let us take it so. But then the result which *must* follow is that everything beside this residuum is objective. The circumstances of nature and character will *not* be 'my circumstances'. They will be material to and will qualify rightness, and rightness is objective. The act is right because it is an instance deducible from the code. We have seen the extent of the circumstances which may enter into the act, and it is now obvious that *either* we must give up the idea of deciding right and wrong systematically from a code, *or* we must provide in the code for all these complications, not only for all combinations of outward events, but also for the differences of nature and character. Otherwise we shall have only a 'subjective criterion'.

It is much to be wished that Mr. Sidgwick would express himself more definitely on this point. As it is, I cannot understand him to do anything but accept the second proposition. Let us proceed, however, to the practical application of the code.<sup>1</sup>

'We must observe that the admission of an exception on general grounds is merely the establishment of a more complex and delicate rule, instead of one that is broader and simpler: for if it is conducive to the general good that the exception be admitted in one case, it will be equally so in all similar cases' (448).

We see so far that 'exceptions on general grounds' are allowable, since they are not really exceptions at all, but additions to the code. How simple and how workable that code will be the reader may stop to consider. Or rather let him wait until he has read the following:—

'There is, however, another kind of exceptions, differing fundamentally from this, which Utilitarianism seems to admit: where the agent does not think it expedient that the rule on which he himself acts should be *universally* adopted, and yet maintains that his in-

<sup>1</sup> I must earnestly beg the reader to go through the whole chapter, bk. iv, c. 5, not only to check me, but to convince himself.

dividual act is right, as producing a greater balance of pleasure over pain than any other conduct open to him would produce' (449).

Here, most persons would have thought, is an end of the code altogether. But no:—

'Here, however, we seem brought into conflict with Kant's fundamental principle, that a right action must be one which the agent could desire to be done by all persons under similar circumstances: and yet it was argued (Book iii, c. 1, and c. 13), that this was a necessary truth involved in the very idea of right conduct. And it certainly seems to me such: only (as was noticed in Book iii, c. 7, in the particular case of veracity) we must admit a qualification of this rule, which importantly modifies its practical application: we must include among relevant "circumstances" the belief (supposing it to exist) that the action will not be widely imitated. In short, the Kantian principle means no more than that no act can be right for me "because I am I": if right for me, it must be right on general grounds and therefore for some class of persons: but there is no reason why this class should not be defined by the above-mentioned characteristic of believing that the act will remain an exceptional one' (450).

We are not surprised after this to find that

'the Romanist view of the economy to be observed in the distribution of truth, seems to be strictly in harmony with Utilitarian principles' (452).

And, to continue the quotation:—

'So again, in so far as the harm of an act consists chiefly in its bad example, it may on Utilitarian principles be right if it can be done with perfect secrecy, but not otherwise. On both these points Utilitarianism is manifestly at issue with Common Sense: for the very notion of the latter involves the repudiation of an esoteric morality, differing from that popularly taught: and an action which would be bad if done openly is not commonly thought to be rendered good by secrecy' (ibid.).

'Thus the Utilitarian conclusion, carefully stated, would seem to be this: that the opinion that secrecy may render an action right which would not otherwise be so, should itself be kept comparatively secret: and similarly it seems expedient that the doctrine that esoteric morality is expedient should itself be kept esoteric' (452-3).

I suppose all this is to be inserted in the code, and at

this point I will put it to the reader whether what it comes to is not in plain language this, that, taking the greatest surplus of pleasure to the creation as the end, you may and ought to use your private judgement as to the means: that *any* act, no matter how seemingly immoral, is moral for you if you have a sincere opinion that it will increase the surplus. I will use no illustrations to help the reader to understand this doctrine; but I will venture so far as to ask him to make them for himself.

All that is left of the 'system of objective rules' is this. Having judged an act to be the means to the greatest pleasure, you add to your judgement the superfluous, if not senseless, formula, And if any one else were I, it would be right for him to judge and act as I do. Then you may call the act Right and Duty, or (perhaps) even more than Duty (456). If this is so, and follows necessarily from Mr. Sidgwick's teaching, then it may be no more than an idle fancy that once and again has made us think of the Probable Opinion; it may be wholly unfair to see the doctrine that the moralist tells men what they ought to think (352), and that Ethics is practical Casuistry, take the practical form of the Spiritual Director;—but I think it is fair to say that Utilitarianism, when carried out, comes to something not unlike Jesuitry.

I have no reason to suppose Mr. Sidgwick to be more friendly to that cause than I am. But what he teaches, and what must follow from his teaching, we must take on its own merits. And at this point he may say he is treated unfairly, that these casuistical doctrines are valid only in the present transitory stage, where the morality of 'common sense' still lingers, and where the moralist has not yet (with the assistance of the sociologist) succeeded in constructing the full code. But I do not think this is what he means. Let us go on to the next paragraph:—

'Of course in an ideal community of enlightened Utilitarians this swarm of puzzles and paradoxes would vanish: as in such a society no one can have any ground for believing that persons in circumstances similar to his own will act in a manner different to that which he adopts' (453).

Now I think we have a right to suppose that our author must maintain one of these two things. *Either* he holds that a time is coming, or may come, when the means leading to the maximum of pleasure will have been systematized with all the above qualifications in one harmonious code, and further believes that the community will be so enlightened as not merely to have mastered this code, but to be able by private judgement to bring each action under the fitting clause—or he does not affirm this, but thinks that the relative distinction of the 'enlightened' and the 'vulgar' may or must continue.

If he accepts the first alternative I withdraw my objections. But I shall leave it to the reader to judge whether argument is any longer possible; whether we are not in the realm of fiction and apocalyptic literature; whether, after having emptied the contents of each human being into this monstrous code, Mr. Sidgwick has not been forced to postulate something like omniscience in 'the individuality of the individuals' which is left to execute it.

But if he accepts the second, then does not all that I have urged hold good? When we look things in the face, is it not moral for any one, who likes to call himself a moralist, to use and act on his private judgement as to the means which will produce the maximum of pleasure in any and every case in which he chooses to do so? And has not so far the result proved mere individualism, and the objective criterion turned out 'subjective'?

'Ah but', I may hear, 'Mr. Sidgwick distinguishes objective and subjective Rightness. Have you forgotten that?' Indeed I almost had. But let us see what 'objective rightness' means.

'By Utilitarianism is here meant the ethical theory, first distinctly formulated by Bentham, that the conduct which under any given circumstances is externally or objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness to all whose interests are affected' (381).

The end is the maximum surplus. The means are the actions and rules which necessarily lead to that end, according to Mr. Sidgwick in *one* way, but for argument's

sake let us say in one or more possible ways. In any given circumstances there is one course of conduct (or several courses) which are externally and objectively right. And now I ask, How can this course be known? The science of Ethics does not exist; what can take its place? The science of Ethics, I make bold to say, while man is man *can* never exist. Even if the world never altered, to have a complete knowledge of the laws of life, and to be able to judge correctly the enormous complication of detail so as to say, This act will increase the surplus and that act will not—goes beyond the human knowledge that we find in experience. And if the world alters, then the idea of knowing beforehand the laws of that alteration and of calculating existing data accordingly, is the mere dream of a doctrinaire which omniscience alone could make real.

'That there is in any given circumstances some one thing which ought to be done, and that this can be known, is a fundamental assumption' (6). But if that thing be 'objective rightness' it cannot be known. To say of past conduct, This *was* objectively right, is to say, No other course would have produced more pleasure on the whole. To say of present conduct, This *is* objectively right, is to say, No other course will produce a greater surplus of pleasure to humanity or the creation. Such knowledge seems to me so plainly beyond the reach of our minds that I think it is not worth while to dwell on the point. Once more I must leave it to the reader.

But if such knowledge is, I will not say too high for us, but clearly impossible, then 'objective rightness' *is* what we *think* objective, and we are left with 'subjective rightness'. And, in the teeth of his own doctrine, Mr. Sidgwick *himself accepts this conclusion*.

'Thus upon any theory of Ethics we require to distinguish *real* from *believed* or, as is now commonly said, "objective" from "subjective" rightness. Indeed this distinction sometimes involves us in a practical perplexity, not as regards our own conduct (for we obviously cannot distinguish what we believe to be right from what really is so) but in arguing with others' (182).

'For a Utilitarian must hold that it is always wrong and irrational

for a man to do anything else than what he believes most conducive to Universal Happiness, and it is not possible for him to do more' (456).

The difference in the end is between what *we* think right and what others think it, and, on our author's view, what is that more than a 'subjective criterion'? 'But no subjective criterion of duty, however important it may be, can help us to construct a system of objective rules of conduct' (184).

This is what we wanted to show, that a one-sided view has proved fatal to itself, that the attempt to make right 'objective' in abstraction from the individual, has issued in the confession that right is 'subjective', and individual judgement the practical criterion.

And now a word in conclusion. The reader may say, Then *is* not right merely subjective, and is not that contrary to the moral consciousness? I think it is contrary, but it is not my doctrine. For me, though right is subjective, it is none the less objective; but rather it is one just so far as it is the other. It is *both*, not in the sense that this or that man or set of men, as such, *make* it, nor in the sense that what *is* objectively right is simply taken up by the subjective side, and so *becomes* also (formally) subjective, but that right is a whole which is determined by both elements, and apart from either is not itself. I cannot further explain this here.

And again if I am asked, But does not the doctrine you hold admit of collisions of duties and exceptions to rules, and is not that Jesuitry? Would it not in fact be pernicious in practice?—my answer is very simple, that for me Ethics is not practical, but is a purely speculative science. I do not for one moment wish to blink the fact that in my opinion Ethics must teach that whereby the moral consciousness may be offended, and I have never attempted to blink it (see *E.S.* 143 = 158). But a practical collision between Ethics and morality is for me a sheer impossibility, because the former has nothing whatever to do with practice. The question for me is solely, 'Is moral

science *true*? Has it or has it not succeeded in understanding the *facts* of morality?’

The truth or falsehood of this science is not to be decided by a direct appeal to the moral consciousness. This is supreme in its own sphere, as the experience which gives facts, but it cannot leave that sphere without altering its nature and losing its authority. Theory stands and falls by the theoretical text alone, i.e. its agreement with the facts and with itself. It is to start from and be verified in experience, but it is *not* mere experience. It is reflection and interpretation; and when mere experience pronounces on the abstract conclusions of science, then it ceases to be experience and, becoming theory, must itself stand and fall by the theoretical test.

But when science ceases to understand and proposes to alter the facts, then common experience has a right to be heard, and the more loudly it speaks the better for all parties. For Mr. Sidgwick moral science is practical Casuistry which, if it does *not* alter the facts of life, has no title to existence. And here, in my opinion, the province of non-theoretical morality is invaded, and it has a right to speak. Science (to repeat it) is absolutely free while it is theory, while it keeps to the *ὄν*, and what is called ‘common sense’ is simply out of court. But when it becomes art, and applies itself to *γένησις*, then it must answer for itself and not fall back on the privileges of theory. Thus in morals against a theoretical dissection or construction of morality, however abhorrent to our feelings, we can properly claim no right but that of scientific discussion; but against any practical proposal we have a right to speak as practical moral agents.

I hope the reader will not go away with the idea that I wish to represent our author as a revolutionary character, or his book as ‘dangerous for young persons’. I do not suppose there is any serious or, I might say, any difference of opinion between us as to what in particular is right and wrong, for we both substantially accept the doctrines of ordinary morality. The difference is one of principle, not detail. I object not to the things he teaches us to do, but

to the spirit and the way in which he teaches us to do them. It is not the particular conclusions of his Casuistry, but the whole principle of it, that seems to me both false in theory and corrupt in practice.

And if we consider not our author himself but his main doctrine, we must say more. Deduced by a man of practical good sense, the conclusions of the Hedonistic Art of Life would never seriously conflict with common morality. There are good psychological reasons for that. But once admit the principle, and what is to happen if men with no sense nor hold on real life, but gifted with a logical faculty, begin systematically to deduce from this slippery principle? Is this not a danger, and is it a wholly imaginary danger?

### § 9. *The Final Difficulty*

'And yet we cannot but admit . . . that it is ultimately reasonable to seek one's own happiness' (473). I confess that, prepared as I was by a passage on p. 374, and though I saw that our author was but half-hearted in his attitude towards Egoism, I did not expect this. Here it is, however, and there can be no doubt about it. But 'whatever I judge to be Good, I cannot reasonably think that it is abstractly and primarily right that I should have it more than another' (366). 'In fact I have defined "reason" so that "reasonable" conduct must mean "right" or what "ought to be done"' (29), and right is 'the same . . . for all Minds or Subjects' (182). This again has been the constant theme, and the nerve of the main argument. How did we suppress the Egoist but by this? And now why did we knock down the Egoist at all if we meant to set him up again? I must suppose that Mr. Sidgwick holds that 'reason' gives us two contradictory reports; and having used one throughout his book<sup>1</sup> he now brings forward the other. The previous argument then rests on a thesis the contradictory of which is no less true. If that is so, it may perhaps not be presumptuous to suggest that we might have been clearly

<sup>1</sup> There is an exception on p. 473. Cf. *supra*, p. 73, note, and p. 102, note.



informed of it before. It looks very much as if our author, after all his efforts, finds the egoistic position too strong for him, and is willing, if only it can be accomplished, to avoid the 'conflict between the two kinds of reasonableness' (374) by subordinating everything to the selfish end. The reader must judge whether, if this is so, a large and important part of the work must not be seriously modified, and whether at last 'practical reason' means anything at all.

Well, so much seems pretty clear, that it is reasonable to seek *both* one's own maximum pleasure *and* that of the creation; and the problem is to satisfy both desires at once. The question seems not so much about what ought to be as about the consistency of the Practical Reason (470-1). If the Good (sc. pleasure) of the individual is not ultimately identified with Universal Good (sc. pleasure), then the universe (471) is 'fundamentally irrational' and morally chaotic.

In other words, it is 'a matter of life and death to the Practical Reason' (371) to show that the only true selfishness is morality, and morality the one best selfish policy.

The solution of the contradiction, which brings order out of chaos, is that certain quantities of pleasure and pain should be attached to individuals, that they should be adequately rewarded for obeying the rule of duty and punished for violating it (470).

The difficulty is to show how this attachment of pleasure and pain is to be effected. Humanity, we find, cannot wholly carry out the task, and hence something external to humanity is required. What remains then? Surely, surely it is our old friend the *Deus ex machina*,<sup>1</sup> and anxiously we sit awaiting him: the crisis is at hand, the actors at a deadlock and we on the stretch. Vain expectation, for the days of Paley are gone by. The machine is grown old, and the god will not come to the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sidgwick wishes to justify both selfishness and morality. The way to do it is to show that they are one thing from different points of view. He fails to effect any union from the internal nature of each, and so requires them to be brought together from the outside. That is a purely mechanical expedient.

front, and the stage is in confusion, and the curtain falls hurriedly in the middle of the fifth act.

As to the moral and religious character of Mr. Sidgwick's doctrine I have said what I thought necessary elsewhere. What I think he should make plainer is whether he thinks the above hypothesis removes evil from the universe; how this is possible while human beings remain on the one hand so stupid, and on the other hand so impulsive; and, supposing moral evil is not removed, whether 'Practical Reason' is satisfied with that. Next, what does he mean by *adequate* reward and what does he mean by punishment? Is the pain merely to be threatened? Will that serve? Surely we are much too stupid. Is it to be inflicted? Why? What good does that do? Is not that *immoral*? And what reward is adequate? We know what coin the 'Wages of Virtue' are to be paid in, but the amount surely matters, and the rules of payment for work; for may we not after all be dealt with unfairly? I do not know what our author's answer to these questions is, or whether he thinks they need an answer. I am of opinion that, if Hedonistic Moral Theology is to stand, they must be answered, and also that they cannot be answered.

And yet we cannot in fairness leave the matter here. We should wrong our author if we took him at his word, and judged him to mean no more than he says. His difficulty, we must believe, is other than he thinks it, and it is the old puzzle, How can morality be reconciled to the world?

The hardest form of the question, the problem of evil and the moral ought, is, I think, not what Mr. Sidgwick contemplates, nor again that of the general coincidence of happiness and virtue. What he has in his mind we take to be the familiar stumbling-block that in the world we know each man *is* not happy according as he is virtuous, and that he *ought* to be so because he deserves to be so. This is a knot which more than one philosopher has called on God and immortality to loose or to sever, and we think this was the real *dignus vindice nodus* with Mr. Sidgwick. It is indeed no matter to treat lightly, but a serious and difficult problem. I do not pretend to give a satisfactory solution,

but, even though I overstep the limits of my undertaking, I will offer some remarks.

First of all, it is necessary to remember that in healing an evil there is a risk of 'healing it by another', and that this is specially the case in a doctrine of rewards and punishments. Seeking to satisfy morality we may postulate that which itself is morally offensive, and I think this has certainly been done in some forms of the doctrine of rewards and punishments,<sup>1</sup> though I am far from suggesting that it is so with all. But I am not going to enter on this point.

I think the simplest plan is to go to the moral consciousness and ask the question, Do I deserve a reward for doing my duty? Do I deserve punishment for moral offences? If punishment and reward are taken to consist in mere pain or pleasure attached to me from without, I cannot find that morality tells me I deserve *either*. But if they are taken to mean the lowering or heightening of my private life, then I understand it to say that I do deserve punishment, but not that I deserve reward.

My bad will is what ought not to be, and the negation of that will is demanded, though mere feeling of pain is not. But the assertion of the good in me to the suppression of the bad entails lowering of my private existence, contradiction and pain. It may entail, *supposing* that to be the only way to assert the good, even my extinction, and so this may be demanded.

The heightening of my existence as *mine* I cannot see that morality does demand necessarily. Calling for the assertion of good in me it does call for the assertion of my existence. But I cannot find that it says to me, Your existence *ought* to be increased with increase of the good. On the other hand it does say, You must assert the good to the extinction of your existence, *if* that is the way to assert the good.

<sup>1</sup> Here is a specimen: 'I shall therefore dismiss my reader with this maxim, viz., our Happiness in this World proceeds from the Suppression of our Desires, but in the next World from the Gratification of them.' *Spectator*, No. 634.

So much seems fairly clear; but then the real question is, I think, not, Does morality say this? but, Does it not *also* say something more, and something perhaps not agreeing with this? Do we not feel when we see wickedness flourish and virtue in rags, This is not right, or good, or just? No doubt we do. And then must we not say that it is just or good or right that advantage should go with virtue, and disadvantage with vice, not merely on the whole but in each individual agent, and that a world where it is not so is not governed morally?

It would no doubt be possible, taking a position of extreme rigour, to call in the name of morality for the suppression of these sentiments: but that we feel would be a one-sided and unsatisfactory view of the case.

There can be no doubt that the demand for rewards as well as punishments rests on a true moral judgement ('instinct' or 'intuition' if you will). But I think it is a mistake to suppose that this demand is absolute. The error of the moral or theological doctrine we are discussing is, I think, first that it maintains in an unqualified manner that which is nowhere true apart from a higher truth, and secondly, that, by a false or uncertain analogy, it asserts the conditions of life as we know them in human society to be valid beyond that society. But this is to anticipate the conclusion.

Let us ask then, Is it just that unequal happiness should go with equal virtue? The preliminary answer to that is, *If* there is a law which assigns advantage and disadvantage in proportion to virtue and vice, then you deserve both, and it is unjust if you do not have them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I must ask leave here to correct a mistake I have made elsewhere (*E.S.* 191 = 211-12, note). I denied that getting one's deserts and getting justice were the same thing. Of course in real justice they are not the same, but then in ideal justice they are, and I cannot now understand how I failed to see this. In fact, one's desert is what is due to one by law: it is advantage or disadvantage necessarily connected with our acts by virtue of a law. The execution of such a law is justice, and hence 'what is just' and 'what I deserve' are two names of one thing. It follows that there is no desert where there is no law; and it follows again that, *if* the highest moral law is *not* a law providing for the distribution of advantage and disadvantage, then

This is not much more than a verbal answer, and I give it to call attention to the meaning of justice. The real question is not, Is it *just* that there should be a moral law for assigning advantage and disadvantage?, for that, I think, has no meaning at all. It is, *Ought* advantage and disadvantage to be assigned? Is there an absolute moral law to that effect? And if so, does it not remain unexecuted? If you or I were the ruler of the universe, should we not think it *immoral* to govern it as it is governed? That is the real question. Should we not have a law to reward virtue and vice, and should we not act on it?

I think we make a mistake if we affirm this, and the mistake, as we said, consists partly in an unfounded analogy, and partly in an incomplete analogy. We take the analogy of human society, and then we emphasize one moral law which holds there, forgetting wholly the highest law. I will take the latter point first.

(1) If you or I were the ruler of a finite human community, should we feel morally bound always to assign disadvantage and advantage in proportion to moral evil and good? Should we feel bound always to reward virtue? I do not think so, but for the present let us say, Yes, we will reward virtue and punish vice proportionably by an absolute law. Now I ask, *Why* should we do this? And for myself I answer, We do this because by doing this we realize the greatest amount of good (not pleasure).<sup>1</sup> But having said this, I begin to perceive that this law cannot be absolute. We are the servants of the law in one way; in another way, by identifying ourselves with the highest law, Do the most good, we override all lower laws and become their masters. Human life being as it is, we do most good by having rewards and punishments generally; and again, for the sake of the good, we are obliged (for obvious reasons) to go by a law. But then, all that being

the conceptions of justice and desert are inapplicable there and must be overruled.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sidgwick does not yet (*M. o.s. ii. 32*) seem to be aware that a man may be 'prepared to accept "Common Good" as the ultimate end for which moral rules exist' and yet reject Hedonism.

admitted, it does not follow that we may never go by another law which overrules the former.

And now I put it to you, if you were ruler, whether you would have an absolute law to reward virtue proportionably, or whether you would do it without a law. If the latter, how do you justify it? If the former, then are you not speaking of what *might* be best if the world were not the world it is, but rather what you wish it to be? Does not experience show that such a law would not be moral as things are, because it would do more harm than good?

I think we can easily see that we might have a state of society in which, if the ruler tried to distribute advantage and disadvantage by merit, he would produce on the whole less virtue and more vice. If so, what is it moral to do? Surely to go on the absolute law to do good, and to override all relative laws. Surely the law of retribution is one of these relative laws.

Morality, it seems to me, not only can but does approve of such a proceeding. No rational community tries to go by an absolute law of rewards and punishments. They all exercise for instance the right of pardon, because they do not believe that justice is the highest moral law. And morality sanctions what they do.

It is the old matter of collision of duties. For morality I am sure no law is absolutely imperative except the law, Realize the good; and *all* other laws must in theory be subordinate to this. In practice I do not say *all* are, because a collision may never be able to take place, but in practice again I am sure that this law of rewards and punishments is subordinated. In fact the highest moral law, before which all others must bow, is not justice; it does not directly distribute advantage and disadvantage to the individual, and stands above such a consideration.

Of course it must be understood that I am speaking of the world and morality as we know them. I recognize no other criterion. The world of our fancies and wishes, the home of absolute categorical imperatives, has no place in legitimate speculation.

What it comes to then, so far, is this. In human com-

munities it is unjust not to reward and punish where there is a law to do so. It is right to have such a law where by doing so you realize most good. Otherwise it would not be right to have such a law. And where you have such a law it may be right to override it. Yes, I will say it, there is a duty to be unjust.

(2) If this is true, then the analogy as we had it was left incomplete. And moreover, in the second place, it is unfounded. I do not see how we have the means of judging from that which we do in human communities for the sake of the good, to that which is good and right to be done in the universe. We do not, and (is it sceptical to add?) we cannot, fully know the conditions there. If any one wishes to maintain that, *because* advantage and disadvantage do not coincide with virtue and vice, *therefore* the government of the world is not moral, he must be prepared to show that, if he were in power, he could produce less evil and more good than there is, by going on a law of rewards and punishments. In other language, supposing that in all cases the self-realization of each man as such were proportionate to the identification of his will with the will of the whole—would the will of the whole system be more intensely realized in fuller individuals? I do not see how any man is to say, Yes; and, if he will not do that, his objection must fall.

The mere moral consciousness cannot pronounce on such questions as these. It sees its good and goods, and it knows its duty. Give it an hypothesis, an 'if', and with care you may extract something from it; but it is a delicate matter to do so, for, if you put your case in the least one-sidedly, you are sure to get a wrong answer. And to turn an 'if' into an 'it is' is wholly beyond it. Let me remark in conclusion that the reader who wishes to fall back on Omnipotence will find a good answer in Mr. Sidgwick, p. 469.

But from this theological discussion we cannot shut out religion. And, when we get there, it does seem that the notion of claiming reward for our merits and standing on our rights with God is a pre-Christian point of view, I had

almost said an anachronism. We all know that one of the leading doctrines of Christianity is that not one man has any desert before the law, or can be justified except on his abnegation of every sort of claim. No one can deny that this is an important phenomenon of the religious consciousness, and I think it is not harsh to say that a theological discussion which overlooks or refuses to consider this fact as a fact, is a strangely one-sided account of the subject.

It is natural at the end of our examination to ask ourselves what we think of the argument as a whole. It would be idle if I said anything else than that, as an argument to prove a thesis, I believe it has no value. I can find no unity of principle which holds its parts together. Rather I seem everywhere to have seen an attempt to unite irreconcilable points of view, which has failed because the criticism, which should first have loosened their opposition, has been wanting. Hedonism and Individualism on the one side, and abstract Rationalism on the other, have met but have not come together, and the result is a mere syncretism, a mechanical mixture of both.

I make no pretence to estimate the worth of *The Methods of Ethics* as a whole, but I may say this much, that, as we have found an absence of criticism in its leading ideas, so it is far from being a complete collection of opinions on the subject of which it treats. And this failure to take account of the views most opposed to traditional English doctrine has been at least one cause of the uncertain handling of leading conceptions, and the confusion in the result. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the work is valuable; and it is obvious that there are two things in it which for some time will keep their place—the examination of popular morality and the discussions on English thought. No book, it is safe to say, has been published for years which has done so much to stimulate ethical speculation amongst us, and in more senses than one to point to a reform in our moral philosophy.



## APPENDIX

## NOTE A

Whether the sum is to be realized as a summed series I do not know; but in *Mind* (o.s. ii. 37)<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sidgwick writes as if this might be his opinion. In this article he subjects to 'summary treatment' the objection against the sum of pleasures as stated by Mr. Green. I shall not presume to say anything on Mr. Green's behalf, who is far better able to defend himself than I am. But as Mr. Sidgwick has mentioned my name in the matter, I may point out that he has not made any attempt to meet the objections I raised in my book. He may please himself as to doing this, but he should not write as if he had done what he has not done. I asked, Is the sum finite or infinite? He has not answered. I asked, Is the end realized in life or after death? He has not answered. He is silent on the question of approximation as the end; and if he answers the question whether the sum is a series in time or coexistent, it is impossible to say what his answer is (vide *E.S.* 88-9 and note = 97-8). If our author wishes the issue to be clear, he must first take the trouble to find out what he means by greatest sum of pleasures as the end, and not leave to a critic the task of conjecturing his views before he examines them.

So far as what Mr. Sidgwick has said bears on the general question I will endeavour to say what is required, though I can do little more than repeat the remarks in the text.

And first let me say that the question is whether we can *get* the Hedonistic end, *not* whether we can *aim* at it, and that it is time our author realized this distinction rather more clearly. Next, if Mr. Sidgwick means by 'greatest' an infinite sum, I refer him to my book (70, 89 = 76, 97). If he means a limited sum, then what he has to say seems to come to this. 'A finite greatest possible series in time can be summed, and hence greatest sum of pleasures may be gained, because the pleasures are had, though not all at once. And, again, the sum is a whole with parts, and you can have the whole by and in the parts.' (These of course are not his words.)

Now the question here is *not*, Can any finite series in time be considered as a whole with parts? The question is (i) What does greatest possible sum mean? And (ii) If the end is the realization of a series, can the end be realized *before* the series is summed? And if it is realized not before, is it realized at all?

<sup>1</sup> [See 'Hedonism and Ultimate Good', *M.* o.s. ii. 27-38.]

(i) Mr. Sidgwick says 'we can aim at living as long as possible, without any regard to the manner of our living; and if we turn out centenarians, we shall commonly be thought to have succeeded in our aim' (37). This shows that our author has not even seen the difficulty. The assertion that A has lived as long as possible means, I should have thought, that under all the conditions, his will being one, a certain finite length of life was possible, and that he has lived it. The amount in comparison with other men is surely irrelevant, unless what is meant is that he has lived as long as it is possible for any human being to live, i.e. that there is a fixed maximum (say 100 years) which he has reached. If Mr. Sidgwick means this latter, and will also fix a maximum of pleasures, then I am quite ready to discuss such a view. But at present he has left us in the dark.

(ii) Next, if we make an end of living as long as possible, or an end of realizing the greatest possible amount of pleasure, can we attain these ends; and if so, how?

The end of living as long as possible is surely not gained until we die. The summing of the series is our extinction; and in and by that alone can we gain our object. So with the sum of pleasures. It may be said of a man, He got the sum of pleasures; but it cannot be said till all his pleasures are over. If a man said, 'I want long life', when he was old he would have got it. If he says, 'I want a great sum of pleasure in my life', again a time may come when he can say, not 'I have it', but 'I have had it'. But if he says 'longest' and 'greatest', he is foredoomed to disappointment.

But the Good must surely be *κτητὸν ἀνθρώπου*. Surely it must be that which I can say I have now, not wait for until I am dead. Surely, again, to have had as much pleasure in life as possible is an object I never can say is mine. And is it not a mockery to tell us, You shall have the end of your being when you have ceased to be: the end is not to have but to have had; and when that comes you are gone?

Does it help us if we bring in the conception of whole and parts? Not in the least. It is the same thing over again. To say of a limited number of pleasures or days, This is part of the whole and so I realize the whole in this, is simply suicidal. For *any* number of moments or pleasures, no matter how small, are a 'part' of the sum, and the dilemma we are left with is as above. Either the end is realized in a part of the series, or it is realized only in the whole, which is not a whole till the series is summed. If the first is true then the end is *not* the sum; if the last is true *we* never get the end.

If this is not plain I am afraid I cannot make it plain. Let us say once more, The object of my life, my object in my life, is to live the greatest possible number of days. Do I, can I, ever get for myself that object? Is it not to turn my life into the aim for a success which cannot come, to make life 'Death's fool', a perpetual dying, where there is loss in every gain, and the end we live for, once gained, means in that moment the loss of all?

It is so with the pursuit of pleasure. If you will not put a limit to that which you want, you never will get it. You never will be able even to say, I have had it. If this is not to aim at the unattainable, what is? And if good is unattainable by me, is it good at all?

And now when we leave the individual, as we must if we are to follow Mr. Sidgwick, does not every difficulty become still more difficult? The series of the pleasures of the sentient world is to be a whole with parts. If the end is to get a part, then *any* part is the end. If the end is to get the whole series, the series of the pleasures of the sentient world must be summed. Then I grant you the end has been, in one sense, attained; but I should like to ask, When does the time come? And who is it that gets, or has got the end?

The end as a coexisting aggregate has been considered in the text; and in ending this note I will ask the reader to believe that it is not for my own pleasure that I have wearied both him and myself with the subject.

#### NOTE B

What does *objective* mean for Mr. Sidgwick?

(i) It is opposed to 'the sensations . . . of the sentient being which may vary from A to B without either being in error' (23; cf. 24). A judgement is not objective when you cannot raise the question of error (183; I abstain from criticism). But this so far tells us only what the objective is *not*.

(ii) There is a comparatively rare use by which it = that which I perceive as *not* my feeling self. 'Attitude of our minds' may be 'objective, extra-regarding rather than introspective', i.e. directed not on pleasures but 'external objects and particular activities' (133). It is opposed to the 'emotion that accompanies his cognition of this relation', i.e. to some law or ideal represented as objective (371; cf. 24). In this sense, however, the objective seems indifferent to truth or error.

(iii) The next sense is 'what is valid for all subjects': and at first it seems as if we might say 'what I judge to be so valid' (cf. 366), 'The objective judgement "that an end is good".' But here if I am wrong

my judgement would be subjective merely, and we see that the true objective = what *is* valid for all subjects, and in this sense it seems = the subjectively necessary or normal. This perhaps is Mr. Sidgwick's most common usage.

Ought is objective; and 'this notion of "ought" . . . we may perhaps say, is a necessary form of our moral apprehension' (93). So beauty and 'the so-called secondary qualities of matter' are objective (24) because error is possible. In this sense the objective is opposed to what *we* like. It is 'an object of knowledge and as such the same for all minds', and so has 'objective existence' (5). It is a 'standard' (96; cf. 187).

And in this signification of necessary or normal we could 'distinguish *real* from *believed* or, as is now commonly said, "objective" from "subjective" rightness' (182; cf. 190 note); and understand 'that Right and Wrong are really objective: that is, the same, whether recognized or not, for all Minds or Subjects' (182). But Mr. Sidgwick means more than this by the term.

(iv) It = what is real apart from consciousness. It is the 'external aspect and relations' of an act (182); 'objective relations of the conscious subject, when distinguished in reflective analysis from the consciousness accompanying and resulting from them' (371); 'the relation between the mind and something else, which is whatever it is independently of our cognition of it' (370); 'objective constitution of the relations of conscious beings' (375). And so we have 'Objective Good' *v.* 'Subjective Good or Happiness' (377).

We see, from p. 381, that this is the meaning of 'externally or objectively right' conduct: and must so interpret the opposition (182) of 'real' and 'believed', and the objective character of Right and Wrong. This again seems meant when it is said (184) that 'no subjective criterion of duty, however important it may be, can help us to construct a system of objective rules of conduct'. And the 'objective rule or imperative' (62) may be something which is, whatever it is, out of relation to the mind.

I think it would have made things clearer if Mr. Sidgwick had been more explicit as to the meaning of this term. May I venture to refer him to Mr. Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 73?

### III

#### IS SELF-SACRIFICE AN ENIGMA?

[First published in MIND, O.S., viii, No. 30, 258-60. April, 1883.]

I AM venturing to offer a few remarks on a very old subject. It is not that I have anything fresh to say, but I should like once again to point out a very common and injurious mistake. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his *Science of Ethics*, has spoken of the association between misery and virtue, and of the general existence of vice and suffering, as a puzzle and an enigma. I should be sorry to appear anxious to weaken the authority of Mr. Stephen's views, since in the main I sympathize with them, and in some of them I even permit myself to feel a personal interest. On the contrary, it is because I believe rash assertions about evil to be fatal to the cause which we both have at heart, and which I may call the *liberation* of Moral Philosophy, that I wish to submit some rather obvious reflections.

When I say that I deny that there is any mystery or puzzle or enigma of any kind which attaches itself to the general existence of suffering and crime, or is involved in the misery of virtuous failure and in the reality of self-sacrifice—I may appear in the light of a presumptuous dogmatist. But my object is to point out that dogmatism and presumption belong to the man who proclaims the enigma, much rather than to myself who deny it. For the assertor does not mean merely that evil is a fact which, like other facts, in the end is inexplicable, and so is a mystery. He must mean that evil is *speciallly* puzzling, and he implies by consequence that he has some reason which would lead him to expect the absence of this evil. For surely if, like myself, he knew of nothing whatever which conflicted in his mind with the presence of evil, then, like myself, he would cease to find any special mystery in the matter.

Well, if so, the difference between him and myself is

that, aware or unaware, he commits himself to a statement which I find to transcend the powers of my understanding; and the question is whether I am obstinately blind or he presumptuously dogmatic. I naturally am forced to adopt the latter view.

Why should evil *not* exist, and why should *not* this or that virtuous man be wretched? You may say that it conflicts with a moral government of the universe. But, if so, you *assume* this moral government of the universe, and (I must be allowed to add) you assume *very much more*. For you feel that self-sacrifice involves injustice, and that a Moral Governor would not be so unjust. But here you quite forget that justice is one duty amongst other duties, and that a Divine Ruler, like his human counterparts, might at times find a duty which overrides bare justice. Thus, assuming that the universe is morally governed, you assume besides that the rule of justice can have no possible exception in favour of another and a higher duty. These assumptions are assuredly not so self-evident that to deny them should entail the charge of presumption.

But I shall be told that the Governor of the universe is *omnipotent*. Perhaps; but, as I could never find out what that means, I can hardly be expected to admit it as true.

If, however, the person who finds evil so puzzling is willing to give up the Moral Governor who never can be more than barely just, I do not see after this how he will succeed in defending his puzzle any longer.

He may say: But all evil, and with it self-sacrifice, are surely undesirable. Yes, perhaps so, I reply; but do you dare to assume that the desirable must be real and the real desirable, and that, if I hesitate to follow, I am presumptuously diffident? And, suppose that I do follow and do assume with you that the desirable must be real, then how am I to know that pain, crime, and self-sacrifice are really undesirable? I do not see how to affirm this, unless I am prepared to say that the world as it stands is worse than nothing, or unless again I have reason to judge that another world, better and more desirable than ours, really is a possible alternative. But for myself I do not possess

such knowledge. For anything that I can tell, every possible alternative (if any alternative is possible) might turn out in the end to be *less* desirable. Of course, if you know better, you are right in speaking otherwise; but I should be glad to be shown the foundation of your knowledge. If you wish me to agree that a change in the character of our world is really desirable, you must show me first that the change is possible, and next that it would not bring on some other alteration which we all should regret. And I think I may say that you will not find it easy to perform this task.

And if I am further pressed with the objection: But possible or not possible, desirable or undesirable, you can fancy a change that you do desire; then I answer: Yes, I can fancy a great deal, spring without winter, eternal youth, and the first flush of passion always at its height. But how can I desire these unless for the moment at least they seem possible, and possible without an overbalancing result of loss and misery? And is this seeming possibility anything better than an illusion? Are you prepared to make our irrational fancies the measure of the universe? If so, you may be right, but once more I must ask to be excused from following you.

Of course I, like other men, do look upon evil as something which, we may say truly, *ought* not to exist; but then I try to find out what I mean by this phrase. What I mean is first of all that human wills *ought* with all their strength to endeavour generally to make evil non-existent. And in the second place I mean that it is *one* of our special duties (though not our sole duty, nor even our chief duty) to aim at the putting an end to injustice and to the possibility of self-sacrifice. In this sense we may say that, from a moral point of view, evil and with it self-sacrificing virtue are both undesirable; we must look on them as things which ought not to be. And so far we are agreed. But if you then propose to rush straight away from this moral duty of finite beings to the general nature of the universe as a whole, if you find courage to assume that *our* moral struggle is in the universe a rent and a conflict—a conflict which

we have reason to think cannot really be there, and so find puzzling—well, if so, I admit that you have justified your enigma, but you must allow me to add that the limits of my intellect seem no limits to yours. You seem first of all to know that the whole is a harmony, and then to be sure that the presence of anything that to us seems a discord must of necessity make that whole discordant. I admire, but cannot follow you.

I am afraid that, when some readers hear a poor 'ontologist' like myself uttering warning cries about the limits of our knowledge, they will think of Satan mighty in the Scriptures or rebuking sin. And yet I feel bound to submit to their attention that very rule which first made me an ontologist, still keeps, and will keep me one: *Where you find a puzzle you are making an assumption, and it is your duty to find out what that assumption is.*



#### IV

### IS THERE SUCH A THING AS PURE MALEVOLENCE?

[First published in *MIND*, O.S. viii, No. 31, 415-18. July, 1883.]

THIS question is one of a number of important and interesting topics which Professor Bain has discussed in *Mind*.<sup>1</sup> He combats on this point the opinions of Professor Grote and Mr. Stephen, and maintains against them the existence of pure malevolence. And by this I understand him to mean that malevolence is not a derivative passion, but has been from the first, or at least is now, one of the original elements of our nature. The subject is one of very great importance. As Professor Bain has pointed out, the consequences of such a view reach very far. And when we consider the weight which in matters of psychology deservedly attaches to the writer's opinions, I cannot but think that on this ground also an answer is due. I could have wished that some person more qualified than myself had attempted a reply; but, in order that silence may not seem an admission, I feel called on to give a reason for the faith that is in me, and for my entire disbelief in Professor Bain's conclusion. It will be, I think, more convenient if I treat the general question and do not reply controversially on every head.

Let me say first what I take the issue to be. The question is *not*, Is there *real* malevolence? That exists and is a clear and palpable fact. It is impossible to deny that cruelty can give pleasure even when there is no ulterior object and aim. And this fact can certainly not be explained *away*; but then that is not the question. The question is whether it can be explained and derived from known laws and elements of human nature.

I must begin by confessing that my mind is biased. Even if I did not see how to account for malevolence, I do

[<sup>1</sup> *M.* O.S. viii. 48-68. For Bain's reply see O.S. viii. 562-72.]

not think I could conclude that it was original. The double presumption that weighs against it would force me, I think, to suspend my judgement.

The first ground for suspense would be my inability to give this passion its place in human nature. It entirely declines to pair off with benevolence founded on sympathy. For we not only see that, as a matter of fact, the perceived pain of others is painful to ourselves, but we also see how and why this *must* be so. The fact follows from the first principles of psychical life. But pure malevolence would seem a thing quite by itself, a foreign germ dropped from outside into our system.

This consideration makes me biased, and there follows another which carries great weight. If a human passion claims to be original, it should show itself present in the lower animals. But what animal is cruel for the sake of cruelty? The accusation has indeed been launched against the cat (Romanes, p. 413), but in this one point that guilty animal is innocent. There is not the smallest reason to credit it with a knowledge of the pain it inflicts, or with the idea of prolonging life to lengthen torture.<sup>1</sup> Add the desire for play to the appetite for slaughter, and all is explained. And if further the monkey is included in the charge, then I should see, in the appearance of the passion so very late in development, a proof that it was developed and hence presumably explicable.

But I do not feel obliged to fall back on these presumptions, since the passion can actually be analysed and explained.

I do not wish to reproduce in detail the excellent remarks made by Mr. Stephen and Professor Grote, but will briefly set down the chief materials that are offered for an explanation, and will then enlarge on one important point. We have in the first place the feeling of wrong, the identification of my comparative failure with another's happiness,

<sup>1</sup> A case was reported to me of a cat, otherwise effective, who was useless as a mouser because his habit was, having played with his mouse until weary of the pastime, then to let it go unhurt. Was this animal malevolent? And, if not, why any other?

and the consequent wish to remove the latter. And under this head we may set down envy and jealousy. We may add that, if anything is a source of pain to me, that may generate hate and the desire to remove this source of pain by retaliation. Then we have the latent self-gratulation on our own security, which tends to make pleasant the view of others' disaster. And again we have another origin of pleasure in the excitement of the senses and the imagination which comes from violent sensations. Mr. Stephen has done well to lay great stress on this fact (cf. Horwicz, *Psychologische Analysen*, II. ii, § 322), and I do not see how it can be called in question, or itself in every case reduced to malevolence. When the vessel is among the breakers and the life-boat in the surf, who but hastens to look on, and yet who wishes ill? What malevolence underlies our fearful delight in the supernatural, our passion for adventure, and our love for the perilous contrasts of gambling? At least among human beings we find a genuine 'hunger for change and emotion'; and, whatever in the end we may think is the truth of it, it seems as if, within limits, all heightening and expansion of our 'self-feeling' were pleasant. Nor is it any answer to reply that pain becomes predominant when those limits are overpassed, or when *other* conditions are added.

These known affections of our nature do clearly all contribute to make malevolence, and yet there is another point which I think is essential.

We shall all admit that there exists a love of power. And by this I do not mean the mere pleasure which comes from energy put forth, but the delight in self-assertion and the wish to increase the area of our control. I am not offering these phrases as a theory of the passion, but as a description which may point to an evident fact. There is a desire in human nature to widen the sphere which it can regard as being the expression of its will. And this desire has no boundary. Now the mere existence of another man's will, which is independent of ours, is a limit to this desire, and in consequence we aim at the removal or diminution of that check to our sovereignty. How remove the limit? The limit is removed by the subjugation of the other. We

must make him a material for our self-assertion, in other words, we must work our will on him. But how be sure that we do this? His submission is not enough, for his submission may be willing and he still keep in reserve an independent choice. We work our will on him when he struggles ineffectually, and when we force him to that which he most dislikes. In this way we efface him as a boundary to our power. But why not kill him? Well, perhaps he is useful; and, apart from that, killing must make an end, and the end of him is the end of our mastery over him. We have our will of him most by keeping him in the state which he most longs to escape from. In this devilish extreme of wanton cruelty we have, I presume, got as far as malevolence. We do desire the other's pain, because only by his pain can we make an utter sport and plaything of his will. But even here we do not desire his pain simply and as such. Even here there is a positive ground for our cruelty, and our malevolence is never and could never be *pure*.

This explanation may be confirmed by the reflection that torture inflicted by a third person, who is not our agent, lacks a great element of pleasantness. No doubt we here may sympathize with the torturer, and so get pleasure; but a tyrant, speaking generally, would care little to see the cruelties of a neighbouring tyrant. The malevolence which would take delight in the quiet and passive starvation of the unoffending would be an abnormal product.

Still even that disease could be readily explained. The misanthrope, to whom the sight of abject misery would bring joy, would be a man who for some reason hated his race, was aggrieved by it, and in its misfortunes felt his own depression repaired and his self-assertion restored. Where I hate, I desire the diminution of that welfare which pains me by expressing the source of my pain. And my hatred may lead me to the cruelty of desiring the constant recovery from a constant smart, and the luxurious alternations of a morbid appetite. But even here we have not got *pure* malevolence.

With the above principles in our hands we might confidently approach the pathology of the subject, but I prefer

to call attention to an additional source of pleasure in evil. We are said to be gratified by our friends' misfortunes. That is true, but we should make an important distinction. The lingering disease of a friend would not be pleasant unless it called forth self-felicitation. What is pleasant is a sudden and exciting mischance. The excitement falls under a principle we have described, but the suddenness appeals to our sense of the ludicrous. Now even if we follow Professor Bain (as for myself I cannot) in reducing the comic everywhere to a perceived *degradation*, that is very far from establishing malevolence. For the degradation must imply a degrading *power*, and our pleasure would lie in thus feeling our own self-assertion increased. I think that Professor Bain would find it difficult to verify the presence of malevolence in *every* species of the ludicrous. When we laugh, for instance, at an absurd child's doll, do we do so from a latent *odium generis humani*? And, if malevolence is to be imported into the sense of the comic, are we to find it at the root of our joy in the sublime and of our pleasure in resignation?

I would add one word more on the delights of angry temper. Where this is not retaliatory and *therefore* remedial of our own wrong, it can easily be explained by our love of excitement, and explained again by our desire for making ourselves felt, and for swelling at the expense of those around us. In something of the same way we all cling to our wrongs, for they keep us for ever in mind of our rights, and we hug our hatreds since without them how little would be left to some of us. Our positive self-realization, whether normal or morbid, is still the end of our being. The devil that but denies, the malevolence that is pure, is no mere ethical monster. It is monstrous too psychologically, and, despite Professor Bain's warnings, we must take heart to say that it is not possible.

The reader, I think, can now judge for himself how I should deal with the remainder of the instances adduced; and, while admitting the difficulty of some special applications, I venture to think that the origin of malevolence can be satisfactorily explained.

## SYMPATHY AND INTEREST

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DOES our interest in others come solely from sympathy, and is sympathy a mere consequence of intellectual progress? In the following remarks I shall try to show that these questions must be answered in the negative. They suggest a simplification which the facts will not warrant, and they would press a truth till it becomes one-sided.

Taken broadly, it is true that the idea of others' pleasure or pain must itself be pleasant or painful to my mind. It is true that I am led to promote or to remove this source of my feelings, and it is true that, in the main, I do so by a benefit to the person concerned. It is true once more that mere want of perception is a sufficient cause of defective sympathy, and that a very large part of immorality can be fairly reduced to perceptive stupidity. But I think that these truths are not the whole truth. Instead of saying that interest comes from sympathy we might say that sympathy depends upon interest. And the second statement, I believe, would be as true as the first. In what follows I shall not aim at a complete view of the subject, but shall point out that to some extent we do first perceive because we happen to love, and do not love merely because we happen to perceive.

It cannot in the first place be said that sympathy by itself *is* interest. In rudimentary sympathy the expression of a feeling by another person produces in my mind the feeling which I have similarly experienced. But this feeling contains no reference to another person, nor in itself is it even an active desire. And when it leads to desire I need not aim at the benefit of the person who thus affects me (cf. Stephen, *Science of Ethics*, p. 243). Like some gregarious animals I may turn against the being, the sight of whom gives me pain.

Thus sympathy is not interest; and on the other hand we can have interest without any sympathy. The condition of something other than ourselves may be pleasant or painful, although we do not sympathize. Let me endeavour to explain this.

We are sorry when we see the daisies mown or the trees cut down, and we take an interest in many inanimate objects. But do we sympathize? For trees and flowers we to some extent do feel, but can most of us feel for a book or a house? The illusion is possible, but does it always exist? When the bird cleaves to its eggs and the cat to its den, when the child bewails his broken toy, and the workman groans over the spoiling of his work, when the loss of common articles, if long-possessed, can vex us, and when the mere alteration of places that we love makes us wish for the old scene—is there everywhere here a latent sympathy? Such an explanation would surely in the end prove over-strained. But if so, we may have interest when sympathy is absent.

Is this fact inexplicable? So far from being so, it is even a psychological necessity; and, if we could not love without sympathy, our whole nature would have been changed. We shall agree, I think, that to feel pleasure in one's own welfare, and pain at one's own loss, is possible without sympathy. Well, what is this 'self' in which we take an interest? Is it confined to the sensitive parts of our body? May not rather our idea of that which is our 'self' include anything which is immediately connected with our well-being? We might say that the 'self' in which we feel interested is the world of our habitual sources of pleasure. And when anything we regard as such a source is damaged, we feel that our personal existence is lowered, and are at once concerned to protect or recover. I cannot indeed see how this fact should be otherwise.

Thus interest precedes sympathy, is possible without it, and does not always rest on it. But when we pass to our interest in animate beings, then sympathy will come in. For we cannot have regard for the feelings of others unless we perceive those feelings, and we cannot perceive them

unless in some measure we ourselves feel them. And here at least it may be contended that perception comes first, and that the process is primarily intellectual. Here at least, we may be told, it is defective understanding that is the cause of our deficient sympathy.

But even this contention I cannot admit. I do not doubt the validity of the process described. The mere intellectual apprehension of another's pleasure is assuredly an actual emotional fact, and that emotion must in the main cause an interest in the welfare of the other person. This account will cover a great part of the phenomena, but it will not cover them all. For the interest need not come from and depend upon the perception, while on the other hand the perception may depend upon the interest.

The first point I have explained. When our pleasure or pain is identified with an object, we desire the continuance or cessation of that object; and our desire is so far free from sympathy. The mother is an object of desire to the child before he can know that she feels pleasure or pain. And when this knowledge has come in, I see no reason to suppose that it makes such a simple affection impossible. But if so, speaking broadly, our sympathy might more depend on our attachment than our attachment on our sympathy. And we may remember that selfishness and defective sympathy are not *always* concomitant, nor again do their opposites always go together.

But—to come to the second point—even where they coincide, and where our interest in others seems proportionate to our intellectual apprehension of their state, even here I must pause and must raise a doubt. You tell me that I sympathize because I perceive, but *why do I perceive?* When C is in pain, why does A's mind dwell on this, while B remains blind or inattentive? Can we say that it is simply because B is stupid? Is it true that the most clever persons are the most sympathetic, and the most sympathetic the most clever generally? Experience shows the opposite. Take, for example, our present interest in the lower animals as compared with that felt by our fathers and grandfathers. The change is striking,



but I do not see how it can be simply set down to general growth of intellect. It would be as true to say we are now less obtuse because our sympathies are wider, as to assert that these are wider because we are more clever. And if in answer I am told 'not more clever *generally* but in this *one* respect', that reply is an admission. Why in this one respect if there is no special reason, and what is this special reason?

Let us state the question thus. Granted that, if my attention is fixed upon the misery of others, that will lead me (speaking generally) to regard them with an active interest in their welfare—granted this, why does A's attention keep fixed while B's fails and wanders? Is it not often because A takes an interest while B takes none? And what is this interest? Is it purely theoretical? We cannot say that. Apart from the doubt (which I do not entertain) as to the existence of *any* pure theoretical interest, it is certain that at first the direction of our mind is wholly practical. At an early stage there *is* no attention save practical interest. But if sympathy, to be active, involves attention, while attention itself comes from practical feeling, is it not clear that our regard for others' welfare does not *always* in the end depend upon intellect? If so, the doctrine we criticize has proved one-sided. It is a simplification which would shut out of view one great part of our nature.

We might learn something on this point by considering the development of the lower animals. Are sympathy and affection proportional to intelligence? Are 'clever' and 'affectionate' inseparable qualities? The example of ants and bees would not support an affirmative answer. Co-operative societies perhaps may exist before intelligent sympathy is even possible. But at any rate it is clear that in sympathy we have not got the sole root of morality. If it is right to affirm, Without sympathy no interest, it is as right to affirm, Without interest no sympathy. I believe *neither* would be accurate.

A further consideration of these points would, I venture to think, make the instructive discussion in Mr. Stephen's pages still more instructive.

## VI

### CAN A MAN SIN AGAINST KNOWLEDGE?

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THERE is an old paradox which at some time we must all have encountered. That no one sins willingly, and that vice is ignorance, must at some time have been offered to us all as gospel. And most of us, I presume, have long ago concluded that a truth has here been pressed into a falsehood. We naturally reflect that, as for the artist beauty rules the universe and is the dominant reality, so for the reasoning philosopher reason is the king and master both of the world and of the soul. And we have persuaded ourselves that such prepossessions lead to conflict with fact. For not only may the ruler at times be absent, but even if he is present, yet appetite defies him, and, with no cloak of ignorance, sins wilfully and knowingly in the master's sight.

I cannot think that our persuasion is false. For me, too, the old gospel has joined the museum of one-sided growths, and, with 'the practical reason', has been placed on the shelf of interesting illusions. I would not seek to revive them; but, on the contrary, my object is to remove a hindrance to their well-earned repose. There is a psychological doubt which remains unsatisfied, and serves as the foundation for a serious mistake. Our experiences seem discrepant. For myself, and in my own mind, I am able to verify the presence of wrong-doing in the face of and despite the voice of conscience. I feel sure of this fact, but others are not certain, while others again within their experience are certain of the opposite. They assure me that never until conscience has slumbered, never until for the moment they have forgotten the quality of their act, are they able to give way to an immoral impulse.

It is not likely that any of us are quite mistaken about the fact. When an observer tells us that with him bad

action never coexists with present knowledge, that an actual consciousness of its immorality is incompatible with the victory of any desire, we may be sure that he is not wholly in error. He has observed a fact, but observed it wrongly; and our task is to show that his mistake has come from a view that is partial, and an interpretation that is erroneous.

Perhaps the most convenient way of pointing out the root of the error will be for me to invent a defence, which will show what I think is the source of the delusion. And if I dwell upon truths which we all understand, I may excuse myself by observing that, if all of us understand them, nearly all of us make mistakes because we disregard them.

What defence can we find for the doctrine that knowledge excludes wrong action? We are not forced to invoke the obsolete primacy of the 'practical reason': we may move to the ground of a saner psychology and may rest upon fact. For we may urge, 'No one knows an act to be wrong unless he has an idea of the wrongness. But if this be admitted, observe what follows: the *idea* of wrong implies the *feeling* of wrong. And this consequence is certain; for our ideas, we know, are representative signs, and to perceive the signification without the presence of the whole sign is quite impossible. Thus when you have in your mind the idea of a horse or a cow or a bad action, you possess a present image, part of which you neglect, and part of which you take as your meaning, and use as the idea of something not present but represented. But now what is it that could represent a horse but something present in the form of a horse-image? And what is it again that could be the idea of a moral or of an immoral act, unless it were something present to the mind in one of these qualities? But to be present to the mind as moral or immoral implies a feeling of right or wrong. What represents, and is used as the idea of the act, must therefore imply a corresponding emotional element. If so, however, the conclusion seems proved; for since what represents right or wrong is emotional, it therefore, because it is

emotional, will work. It will not indeed work as the idea of something else, but it will work as the actual present state. It will be the badness that is *felt*, and not the badness that is *thought*, which will have power to move us. In other words, it is the whole sign that is active, and not the mere signification. But this will make no difference. Since you cannot represent the wrong that is signified without the present image which is felt as wrong, the knowledge of vice must thus be *per accidens* a dislike of viciousness, and this felt aversion, psychologically implied in all ideas of immorality, will fetter the will, until, with the knowledge, the feeling disappears.

'And we may support this defence by an appeal to the general theory of motives. A motive, if that means the *object* of our desire or aversion, must be the idea of something pleasant or painful. And thus (I have argued in my *Ethical Studies*), if the motive is the end and is so an idea, then what moves is never the motive as such. But on the other hand the motive will move *per accidens*. For an idea implies a representative state of mind, and that state of mind must have present existence as a psychical phenomenon. The state which represents something pleasant or painful must furthermore itself *be* pleasant or painful. The idea will thus indirectly imply a feeling, and in this indirect way a motive will move.

'And by this we may not only support our paradox, but may prop up, besides, another doctrine. To suppose that what promises to be most pleasant must always move us, we know is a mistake, because the promised is an idea, while the mover is feeling. But since the future prospect of the most pleasant could not be represented to us in idea, unless there were a feeling which served as the sign, hence, through this feeling and *per accidens*, the promise will move, and, *per accidens* again, the promise of the most pleasant will move us the most.'

Such is the defence which we may place in the mouth of our failing paradox, and this defence, though erroneous, still is based on a solid foundation. The reader may refuse to follow us through these psychological subtleties, but I

am sure that any one who is not at home in them is threatened by errors from every side.

The defence we have put forward amounts to this: an idea not only represents something else beside itself, but is in itself an existing phenomenon, and in this capacity does psychological work. And hence the idea of immorality will be felt as an actual painful fact, and so will repel; while, again, the idea of the greatest pleasure will be felt as most pleasant, and so must attract.

The mistake that is made here is tolerably simple. It is true that the idea of a pleasure or a wrong act must imply a feeling, and that this feeling will do *some* work. But it is not true that the feeling need determine the will to avoid or pursue the object of the idea. This is perfectly obvious, and our experience of the contest of discrepant impulses puts it beyond doubt. What is felt pleasant or painful will determine us or not, according as it stands to our whole state of desire. We need ask no hard questions about the nature of desire, but may state the matter thus. Admitting that pleasure and pain are what move us, it is still not mere pleasure nor again mere pain, that determines the movement. It is the greatest felt pleasure, or the balance of pleasure or pain, that will succeed. And hence obviously, when we ask if a feeling will *work*, the question is a question of that feeling's intensity, and a question of its *comparative* intensity.

We shall agree, I hope, that the above is obvious; but it gives us a key to the puzzle before us. When an observer maintains that he cannot act against a wakeful conscience, what happens in his mind, I think, is this. He has fixed his attention upon the wrongful quality of the act, and that fixing of the attention has important results. In the first place it is exclusive; that is, it keeps out *other* ideas, and so removes the conflicting influence of *their* feelings. In the second place (I do not ask how these two functions are connected) the attention strengthens; that is, through attention the idea becomes clearer, and the images and feelings involved in that idea become also stronger; so that to resist such an isolated and heightened prompting

is now impossible. Hence, if our observer were to say, 'When I realize with vividness the immorality of my act, I cannot, while I do so, go on to commit it', I think that his statement would be quite correct. It would be in accordance both with sound psychology and with the evidence of fact.

But such a modified statement would fail to carry the required conclusion. It would not show that, when my conscience is aroused, I am unable then to oppose it and defeat it. For, in the first place, when we have before us the idea of a bad act, our attention need not be concentrated upon this one element of our whole state of mind. On the contrary, we may try to observe indifferently all the discordant factors of our complex condition; and, if we do this, our idea of the immorality of the act will not gain any *relative* increase of strength. And again, and in the second place, there is a very great difference between ideas. Some are highly *symbolic*, and in this case their effect on the imagination and feelings is comparatively weak.

I will try to explain this second point. Suppose, for example, I have thought of something pleasant, and then am asked to think of something *twice* as pleasant. I am able to perform this in more ways than one. I may retain the pleasant image which I already have, and which has furnished me with my idea of the represented pleasure; I may increase the pleasantness of that pleasant image, and may use this increase as a sign of something that is twice as pleasant. In this case we might roughly and inaccurately say that what *represents* twice the pleasure is itself actually felt to be doubly pleasant. But I may take another course: I need not try to double my pleasant image, but may qualify it from outside by another and a foreign image of quantity. That is, I may call up an image of something *not* pleasant, which is increased twofold, and I may use this as a sign to stand for *twice*; and adding this from the outside to my idea of something pleasant, I may so indirectly acquire the idea of what is doubly pleasant. In this case I do not say that the effect on the feelings and on the

imagination will vanish wholly, but I am sure we shall agree that it will be much diminished.

The point is so important that I perhaps may be allowed another illustration. I have the image of a horse before my mind, and I want to think of a hundred horses. Now, to do this, I need not try to have before me a hundred horse-images, but may apply the idea of a hundred from elsewhere. No doubt, this idea of a hundred times must rest upon *some* present image, but there is no sort of reason why it should rest on the obscure image of a hundred horses. In the same way, if I desire to think of a horse one hundred times as large as the first, I need not struggle to magnify my present horse-image. I may employ some *other* obscure image, take from that the idea of hundred-foldness, and employ this to modify my idea of a horse.

And we may strengthen our position by a familiar experience. We all know that as a rule it is impossible to recall either vivid pleasures or vivid pains. But it would be wrong to say that I have not the knowledge that my pleasure or my pain was very great. I do know this; but I know it discursively and by the intellectual addition of the idea of intensity to my idea of the feeling. And hence the effect on the imagination and emotions may be very weak; it may serve in temptation but to sour the pleasure without preventing the sin. In a corrupted state, where the passions are enfeebled and where cruel experience has opened the eyes without changing the heart, we may find the condition described by Lamb, 'the sin and the suffering co-instantaneous, or the latter forerunning the former, remorse preceding action'.

The result of this is that the idea of a greater pleasure need not in itself be felt as more pleasant, nor the idea of a greater pain as more painful. The increase of feeling, if it takes place at all, need take place in no proportion to the increase thought of. This again must be true of the idea of wrong-doing. I may qualify my idea of a certain act by the addition of immorality, but I may transfer that addition from another and wholly separate image. In this case my knowledge that an act is bad does not rest on an image of

the act as bad. It consists primarily in the intellectual use of a symbol, and the secondary effect on the imagination and the feelings may be almost inappreciable.

Our ethical paradox, if true at all, will be true only of a mind which is confined to intuition; and such a mind is not known to exist, except at an *early* stage of evolution. But any mind, which can abstract and reflect and reason discursively, will be able to think of an act as being wrong, and yet the feeling of that act's wrongness may not pass beyond an ineffective minimum. It is only where the attention is concentrated upon the quality of the act, and even then it is only where the act in its wrongful quality is present as a vivid imagination, that the conscience will be irresistible. It is not knowledge, it is a relative degree of feeling excited by a certain kind of knowledge, that coerces the appetite.

This, I think, will furnish us with a partial justification of our paradox, and it also may serve as its final refutation.



## VII

### SOME REMARKS ON PUNISHMENT

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THAT the doctrines connected with the name of Mr. Darwin are altering our principles has become a sort of commonplace. And moral principles are said to share in this general transformation. Now, to pass by other subjects, I do not see why Darwinism need change our ultimate moral ideas. It will not modify our conception of the end, either for the community or the individual, unless we have been holding views which long before Darwin were out of date. As to the principles of ethics I perceive, in short, no sign of revolution. Darwinism has indeed helped many to a truer conception of the end, but I cannot admit that it has either originated or modified that conception.

And yet in ethics Darwinism after all may perhaps be revolutionary. It may lead not to another view about the end, but to a different way of regarding the relative importance of the means. For in the ordinary moral creed those means seem estimated on no rational principle. Our creed appears rather to be an irrational mixture of jarring elements. We have the moral code of Christianity, accepted in part and in part rejected practically by all save a few fanatics. But we do not realize how in its very principle the Christian ideal is false. And when we reject this code for another and in part a sounder morality, we are in the same condition of blindness and of practical confusion. It is here that Darwinism, with all the tendencies we may group under that name, seems destined to intervene. It will make itself felt, I believe, more and more effectually. It may force on us in some points a correction of our moral views, and a return to a non-Christian and perhaps a Hellenic ideal. I propose to illustrate here these general statements by some remarks on Punishment.

Darwinism, I have said, has not even modified our idea of the Chief Good. We may take that as the welfare of the community realized in its members. There is, of course, a question as to the meaning to be given to welfare. We may identify that with mere pleasure, or again with mere system, or may rather view both as inseparable aspects of perfection and individuality. And the extent and nature of the community would once more be a subject for some discussion. But we are not forced to enter on these controversies here. We may leave welfare undefined, and for present purposes need not distinguish the community from the state.<sup>1</sup> The welfare of this whole exists, of course, nowhere outside the individuals, and the individuals again have rights and duties only as members in the whole. This is the revived Hellenism—or we may call it the organic view of things—urged by German Idealism early in the present century.

Now this conception of the end, it seems to me, is not affected by Darwinism; but the case is altered when we come to consider the elements and means. For Darwinism has much to tell us about the conditions of welfare. We are all agreed that the community, though it may have grown naturally to be what it is, should now more or less consciously regulate itself, and deliberately play its own Providence. As to the manner and the amount of this interference we are not at one, but as to its necessity in principle there is no real disagreement. But, if the survival and progress of the race have been due to certain causes, these same causes can hardly now have become not worth considering. If, that is, a foreign Providence has led us, so to speak, hitherto by a certain rule, when we are our own guides and masters are we forthwith to ignore its method? So far as there is a presumption, that surely points to a very different conclusion. I do not mean that it is right for us now consciously to adopt unchanged the old unconscious mode of progress. For it is not possible to

<sup>1</sup> The above view, in my opinion, is not wholly true. It is, however, true enough, I think, to serve the purpose of this article, and so far as any corrections are required in the conclusions, the reader can introduce them.

return to an unreflecting condition, and again no community could allow within itself an unchecked struggle for existence. But when we modify and depart from the workings of natural selection, I urge that we ought at least to proceed on some kind of principle. We ought not thoughtlessly to disregard the old conditions of welfare, but where we supersede these we should know what is to operate in their stead. The laws of past progress must, I admit, be qualified through progress itself, but it is not likely that these laws have become wholly invalid. And, at any rate, to assume this without ground seems plainly absurd. But in our morals and politics this absurdity is dominant. We do not deny that progress has been made largely by natural selection, and we must admit that in this process the extinction of worse varieties is essential. It is clear again that with this struggle and this extinction the community now interferes. Thus the method which in the past *has* succeeded is more or less modified. But if we ask on what principle it is changed, and what is to serve in its place, we find no rational answer. The competition *à outrance* has been checked, and under artificial conditions we seem to sanction a struggle between rival fertilities. We compel the higher type, it may be, to stand by helpless and to be outbred by the weaker and lower, and we force it to contribute itself to the process of its own extrusion.<sup>1</sup> We lay an irrational stress on the education of the individual, we emphasize the less important and the more doubtful teaching of Darwinism. But on the main point, the suppression of undesirable types, we appear ready to entrust our destinies to Providence. Yet we are called on, we know, ourselves to be a Providence to our-

<sup>1</sup> It is no good answer to urge the infertility of the criminal class. The only good answer would be to show that the higher type is everywhere so much the more fertile that this superiority alone ensures its prevalence. And such a contention surely would be ridiculous. I certainly include Mr. Spencer among those who irrationally interfere with natural selection. The limits he would set to competition seem arbitrarily fixed. The old metaphysical doctrine of the individual's rights—a doctrine which became obsolete early in this century—can hardly to-day be considered a rational principle.

selves. And we ourselves deliberately, we know, make frustrate the old providential working.

What has succeeded has not been merely superior fertility. The stronger in other points has used his strength to drive the inferior out of existence. He has certainly not been forced at his own cost to protect that inferior from the natural doom of its defects. And surely the presumption is that what has prospered will continue to prosper. But where is the view of politics which fails to interfere with these past conditions of success? And where is the view which interferes on any consistent principle? But, if so, on perhaps the supreme problem of politics our general frame of mind must be called deplorable. It is full of blindness, cowardice, superstition, and confusion unspeakable. Indeed, one's main consolation must be that perhaps in practice after all things have got to go blindly. But, however that may be, it is not the concern of this paper to deal in general with progress. Assuming here that the welfare of the community is the highest end and law, and assuming that selection among varieties is necessary to that welfare, I intend briefly to apply these ideas to the subject of punishment.

Darwinism, we may presume, should modify the view which we take of punishment. This does not mean that any of our old doctrines need quite be given up. The educational, the deterrent, and the retributive view may each retain, we may rather presume, a certain value. But all of these, it seems, must be in part superseded. They must be made subordinate to another and a higher law—what we may call the principle of social surgery. The right and the duty of the organism to suppress its undesirable growths is the idea of punishment directly suggested by Darwinism. It is an old doctrine which has but gained fresh meaning and force. And its principle is the old principle and the one ground for any sound theory of punishment. The moral supremacy of the community, its unrestricted right to deal with its members, is the sole basis on which rational punishment can rest.

But, if so, how does Darwinism alter our views and

threaten moral revolution? It tends, in a word, to break the connexion between punishment and guilt. This connexion, clearly or obscurely, confusedly or explicitly, is still maintained by well nigh every theory of punishment. The union of these ideas is in fact so rational and strong that in the end perhaps we have no choice but to respect it nominally. While widening the idea and the thing, we might confine the name of punishment to that surgery which seems retributive. But the retributive principle, the absolute restriction of punishment to crime, is the very centre of the position threatened by Darwinism. We have here the main root of that confusion which now obscures the subject. And in passing on to consider some current doctrines I need pay little or no regard to any other principle. Hence I shall at once criticize the retributive view under two forms, a normal and a diseased growth. Guilt and punishment in both of these doctrines are connected necessarily. The first accepts and justifies this essential connexion, while the second attempts to reject it. But rejection and acceptance in the end stand on precisely the same ground. Crime by the perverted view is regarded as *mere* disease, while disease itself is still treated as *only* disease, and therefore to be respected (as hitherto) because it is *not* criminal. I will proceed to explain this statement.

Let us first examine the normal form of the retributive view. We must here distinguish two aspects, a positive and a negative. The first of these declares punishment to be essentially the supplement of guilt, while the second asserts that apart from guilt individuals are sacred. Now, on its positive side I still hold to the retributive principle. The doctrine that punishment is moral reaction, the reaction of the moral organism against a rebellious member—this doctrine, so far as it goes, seems quite satisfactory. And there is little of what I urged years ago,<sup>1</sup> whether in its favour or against its inappreciative critics, that I would scruple to repeat. But then this retributive view pure and simple will not work. For practice, if taken by itself, it is too narrow, and even in itself it labours under intrinsic

<sup>1</sup> *E.S.*, 1876.

difficulties. These latter (to take them first) arise from the doubtfulness of every moral valuation. If you are to estimate morally, then, in proportion as the moral standard grows more inward, the genuine facts become inaccessible. And it becomes less and less possible anywhere to measure exactly moral responsibility. But with a more external standard again you are threatened from the other side. You are left in doubt if your estimate is genuinely moral.<sup>1</sup> And in particular you have to struggle with the task of drawing in each case a line between wilful badness and unwilling disease. Such internal difficulties are a serious hindrance to retribution. If you can acquire the right to punish only by proving moral crime, it seems hard to be sure that this right is really secured. Thus the principle is good, but its application is seriously embarrassed. And partly for this reason we do not usually attempt to apply the principle pure and simple. In practice having secured, as we believe, the right to punish, we give weight also to other considerations. We modify our sentence with an eye to the general good. We make an example, or, on the other hand, we let mercy or policy more or less abridge strict justice. But with this the retributive principle has ceased to be absolute. Punishment has ceased to be essentially an affair of justice, and we have been forced to recognize a superior duty to be unjust. We have not, indeed, given up the idea of retribution and desert, but we have made it secondary and subject to the chief end of the general welfare.

And the negative side also of retribution must suffer the same fate. To punish any except the guilty was wrong because unjust. But how will it be when justice is but an inferior and subordinate duty? It is obviously unjust to remove members not morally culpable on the simple ground that their removal is good for the organism. But then it was unjust before to punish any one in any degree more or less with a view to secure the general good. We cannot, in short, play fast-and-loose with the supremacy of

<sup>1</sup> On this difficulty see some further remarks in my *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 381 [= 431] et seq.

justice. And having once set that down to be an inferior and subordinate principle, we cannot then attempt on any point to take it as absolute. To remove the innocent is unjust, but it is not, perhaps, therefore in all cases wrong. Their removal, on the contrary, will be right if the general welfare demands it. The negative side of justice proves, in short, no stronger than its positive side. And the sacred rights of innocence have become a thing conditional. They exist, so far as the rule of justice is not overruled, and they are intact, if anywhere, there where punishment corresponds to desert. But, where the good of the whole may call for moral surgery, mere innocence is certainly no exemption or safeguard. We may doubt if such cutting-off without crime can fairly be called punishment, but, the thing being justified, I will not pause to consider the name. It is better to ignore a question which does not seem to affect our main result.

We have now considered the normal form of the retributive view, and we have found that its validity is merely relative. Justice, in other words, is but a subordinate principle of Ethics. And on its negative side also the principle is not absolute. To remove the innocent may everywhere perhaps be wrong, but you cannot urge this barely on the ground that their removal is not merited.<sup>1</sup> Let us go on to see the diseased growth from our normal principle.

There is a way of thinking and feeling about punishment, not uncommon in our days, which exhibits a high degree of inconsistency. It more or less explicitly accepts the doctrine that crime (all of it or some of it) is mere disease. Or, rather, crime is taken as a natural deviation from the type. And rightly from this ground a protest is made against such unwilled defects being imputed and judged of morally. Now, with this protest no one can fail

<sup>1</sup> The retributive view again on its negative side is inconsistent, because, apart from punishment, individuals are in practice not sacred. The community is forced to inflict more or less relative disadvantage, and therefore injury, on its members without regard to moral desert. The state is forced to be unjust, and against this injustice the retributive view does not utter any protest.

more or less to sympathize. But here is the beginning of blind and thoughtless confusion. For, protesting against the principle of the retributive view, or at least partially against its application, and thus, at least in effect, withdrawing part of life from that principle's sway, these moral innovators stand at the same time on its absolute supremacy. Justice on its positive side is restricted, but on its negative side is to retain unlimited sovereignty. Criminals, some or all, are diseased, and are therefore innocent, and the innocent, of course, are by justice proclaimed to be sacred. They are to enjoy therefore that treatment which was assigned to mere disease, when mere disease was not taken to include and cover crime. And surely such an attitude and such a claim are most inconsistent. This insane murderer, we may hear it said, is not to be destroyed. Justice is the assignment of benefit and injury according to desert; but this man is not a moral agent, and hence it is unjust to injure him. But, if he is not a moral agent, I reply, surely what follows is that justice is indifferent to his case. What is just or unjust has surely nothing to do with our disposal of his destiny. And hence, so long only as we do not pretend retributively to punish him, we may cut him off, if that seems best for the general good. For justice, we have found, is but a subordinate and inferior principle. It can hear no appeal from the tribunal of the common welfare. And to take a view of crime which seems to abolish all accountability, to make in this way everywhere impossible any application of strict justice, and then in the name of justice to claim protection for ravishers and murderers, seems really preposterous. The claim is rational only as an appeal to us to modify our principles. It is a confused request to us in the name of justice to dethrone justice. But when justice (as it must be) is dethroned, and when Darwinism (as it will be) is listened to, there will be a favourable hearing for the claims of ethical surgery. And we may now dismiss both forms of the retributive view.

But against the unlimited right of the moral organism to dispose of its members is there anything to be set?



There is nothing, so far as I see, but superstition and prejudice. The idea that justice is paramount, that, with the individual, gain or loss must correspond to desert, and that, without this, the universe has somehow broken down—this popular idea is, after all, the merest prejudice. It seems to rest either on the assumption that there is no principle above justice, or on the common error as to the absolute validity of principles. But the necessary collision both of rights and duties, their mere conditional force, and the subordination of all else to the one principle of general welfare, are truths not to be refuted. And, dwelling no more on this crude popular superstition about justice, I will pass on to consider an opposite error. There is a belief that (not animal, but) human life is sacred. The former prejudice as to justice is, I suppose, anti-Christian; but the sacredness of human life seems largely a Christian idea. And I exhibited the root of this error in a former discussion.<sup>1</sup> The individual in the next world has an infinite value; the things of this world, our human ends and interests, are all alike counted worthless, and the rights and duties founded on these interests, of course, bodily disappear. The good of the whole, worthless in itself, can therefore confer no right to interfere with its members; and each individual, on the other side, is, so to speak, the preserve of Providence. Violence, immoral in itself or, at least, immoral for us men, is forbidden us, and is left in the hands of the Deity. Now to criticize this view, otherwise than by stating it, seems here not necessary. Once admit that life in this world is an end in itself, and the pure Christian doctrine is at once uprooted. For, measured by that end and standard, individuals have unequal worth, and the value of each individual is but relative, and in no case infinite. And the community, we have seen, is itself its own Providence, and therefore against its rights the individual is not sacred. With this we may pass from the Christian error, and may proceed to consider a fresh form of delusion. The individual may be taken, as such, to have positive and negative rights, rights not derived from

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished.

another world, but still inhering in him independent of his place in the community. But both the individual and his rights, in this sense, certainly do not belong to our human world, and hence, unless they exist in some other world, they are existent nowhere. They are survivals, in short, from obsolete metaphysics, and about their vital principle I do not intend to speak further. But the rights of these supposed individuals, once placed in a community, must necessarily collide, and all attempts to avoid this collision are idle. And to find a rational ground on which mutual interference is here legitimate, and there unlawful, is once more impossible. This question is one which called for discussion a century ago, but at the present time it can be considered a question no longer. The rights of the individual are, in short, to-day not worth serious criticism.

What is the result which, so far, we have gained? The welfare of the community is the end and is the ultimate standard. And over its members the right of the moral organism is absolute. Its duty and its right is to dispose of these members as seems to it best. Its right and duty is, in brief, to be a Providence to itself. And what went counter to this doctrine we found to be mere superstition.

Darwinism, on the other side (if we may speak for Darwinism), suggests a further conclusion. It could not tell us anything new concerning the end, but about some of the means it spoke decidedly. It urged on us that a condition of welfare is the selection of the more fit, and it added emphatically that selection means the rejection of worse varieties. And, since we now are Providence, it begged us in the name of Providence to reflect. And we found on reflection that we do much to thwart and very little to further the necessary conditions of our welfare. Then, as to punishment in particular, Darwinism showed us a strong presumption. Punishment should, it concluded, in the main be governed directly by the principle of moral surgery. The removal of diseased growths, of worse varieties, Darwinism insisted was obligatory. And it urged us, on this ground, to reform and make consistent our doctrine of punishment. This is our result; and as to

punishment, we have to ask if the conclusion drawn by us in the name of Darwinism is sound.

The conclusion might be unsound as containing but a partial truth. It might be false, in other words, because one-sided. The welfare of the community is the supreme and paramount end. No objection possibly can be based on any ground but this. But on this ground it may be urged that there are other interests, other elements in the moral end, other conditions of welfare. Darwinism unrestricted, we may be told, cannot even exist in social life. There are spiritual conditions of that life, we may hear, more essential than the removal of worse varieties. And the ethical surgery, if so, might cut deeper than Darwinism perceives. It might in the end sever that moral bond by which the community is made one. This is a fair issue; but let me endeavour to make it more clear. Let us ask what Darwinism teaches and what it does not teach. The reader must bear with me if I dwell on what seems self-evident.

Darwinism, rightly interpreted, does not teach a return to nature. Given a community aware of itself in its members, we have, with this, gone beyond any stage of mere natural drift. For such a community, less or more, aims consciously at an end. It more or less has become its own Divinity and Providence. Further, Darwinism does not fix a hard limit to the community's rights. It does not suggest their confinement to the protection of person and property. Indeed, to start with mere competition as a first principle, and then to exclude competition in the most characteristic form of violence, would not be rational. But if, on the other side, the state may repress violence, clearly the state may also suppress other forms of the struggle. Darwinism, again, does not teach the supreme value of education. Certainly education works as a means for getting the best to the front, and as a means for obtaining the full use of the individual's powers. But Darwinism hesitates to ascribe to it greater efficacy. And in comparison with the suppression of unfavourable varieties, the importance of education in any case seems not great. And further, Darwinism assuredly does not teach universal

selfishness. It neither proclaims it as a fact nor does it inculcate mere self-seeking as a moral duty. Mutual assistance, on the other hand, action in common, with more or less of self-sacrifice, is shown to be a condition of higher well-being. Darwinism, in fact, teaches us that within the whole the principle of competition has become subordinate. It has ceased to be absolute, and is overruled less or more by the main principle of general advantage.<sup>1</sup> Help for the helpless, benevolence, charity and mercy, are proclaimed by Darwinism to be conditions of social welfare. They are hence principles, principles once again not absolute, but once again secondary and subject to the general end. And thus, in pressing on us the claims of ethical surgery, Darwinism would indignantly deny a neglect of benevolence. It would urge that true benevolence is unflinching pursuit of the general good. There is no one (it might retort) so remorseless as the humanitarian, no one more ruthless and bloody than the sentimentalist, no one so pitiless as the rider on Christian principles. And it is not a rational world where the surgeon is charged with cruelty.

On another planet, if you like, it may all be quite otherwise. But on our planet, so far as we know, some hardship is inevitable. And if we are to play at Providence, as we must, then we must by commission or by neglect ourselves inflict hardship. Surely, then, the least cruel, the most merciful course of conduct—the best means in our power to diminish suffering—is to regard nothing but the conditions of general advantage. And as to these conditions Darwinism offers a positive doctrine. It teaches, in a word, the necessity of constant selection. It insists that the way to improve—the way even not to degenerate—is on the whole unchanging. That way consists in the destruction of worse varieties, or at least in the hindrance of such

<sup>1</sup> Darwinism does not teach the principle of tribal or national selfishness. Regard for a whole beyond my social group, for humanity, and indeed for all sentient beings, is certainly not opposed to Darwinism. I have omitted these points in the text because I found it best for the sake of argument to simplify the question.

varieties from reproduction. Merely bring the fittest in each generation to the front—do nothing to secure that the next generation shall come from these fittest—and, in short, you are trifling with your mission as Providence. This is what Darwinism teaches, and it adds that society at present sins grossly by commission as well as by neglect. Not content with inaction, society works directly in the very interest of evil. It secures artificially the maintenance and the propagation of the unfit, while the fit are even injured in order to contribute to this general injury. And against such ruinous perversity Darwinism protests. It insists on the necessity of social amputation. The wholesale confinement or, again, the mutilation of worse specimens is not a satisfactory substitute. For it seems wrong to load the community with the useless burden of these lives and, in the second place, there is a consideration too often ignored. To maintain in existence a creature, while depriving that creature of the conditions of happiness, is surely to inflict on it the direst suffering. Now, to pass such a sentence worse than death would, of course, be right if it were necessary and an ultimate resort. But in any other case it would be the extreme of indefensible cruelty. To remove from the social organism, as it were, by ligature a member sentient and miserably conscious through life of its own protracted dying, seems a most barbarous device. And by comparison clearly there is more kindness and mercy in the knife. To my mind this question of imprisonment has been often a cause of indignant surprise. That a man should hate capital punishment is not surprising. For, apart from religious and metaphysical superstitions, we must admit that such punishment is a terrible necessity. But that the same man should on another side feel no compunction, that he should cheerfully sanction a long, or even a lifelong, imprisonment, that to bury alive a fellow-creature should, in plain words, seem a matter of course—this, to me, I own, is disgusting. It illustrates glaringly our moral confusion and blind sentimentality. For to shrink from an evil because we cannot ignore it, and to forget every horror not inconveniently forced before

our eyes, is too characteristic of our morality. And too often we drape with the clothes of mercy the detestable idol of stupid cruelty. But human nature everywhere is prone to avoid fundamental issues. Life is a thing beset on all sides by hard necessities, and of these to choose the least is the one rational way of kindness. To face a problem in this spirit is, however, not possible for the sentimentalist.

Now against this claim and this plea for ethical surgery I do not suggest that no rational objection can be urged. For our remedy clearly would bring some amount of evil. It would cause a shock, not merely to superstition, but to a large body of genuine moral feeling. It would certainly neither prohibit nor discourage works of true mercy, and it would entail no degree of physical cruelty. But still our remedy would have to utter and to enforce this sentence, 'You and you are dangerous specimens; you must depart in peace.' It would probably add, 'There are some children here over and above what we want, and their origin, to say the least, is inauspicious. We utterly decline to rear these children at the public cost and, so far as we can judge, to the public injury.' Now such an attitude plainly would outrage a large mass of moral sentiment, and it would undeniably therefore be a source of suffering and evil. But on such points our sentiments to some extent are conventional, and therefore, so far, might very well be changed. And in any case to avoid as long as possible any moral shock is not the end of our being. The real question is, on which side lies the balance of harm? Measured by the good of the community, is moral surgery the less or the greater of two evils? We have to choose, in brief, between the complex results of alternative courses, and I do not propose to attempt a detailed estimate. I wish not to advocate any result to which my mind has been led, so much as to press for a serious consideration of the problem. I am satisfied if I have shown that the claim of moral surgery, however inconvenient it may be, cannot at least be ignored.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is no good answer to urge that, after all, we have progressed so far in spite of neglect. For the conditions certainly have not remained the same.

'Then, on an ethical subject too, you really offer no practical suggestion?' No, in an ethical discussion I even venture to think that practical proposals are out of place. And then for myself I make no claim to be a practical man. I am sceptical as to the value for such a purpose of any moral philosophy, and I am sure that my small energies would not be decently expended in the field of practical reform. I am a theorist, in short, but yet, I hope, not anything of a projector; and if I am to make myself ridiculous, I prefer at least some manner which suits my tastes. But what advice could I offer beyond general platitude and well-worn commonplace? It is the part of a wise man to consider carefully the 'for' and the 'against', and before accepting an operation to weigh critically the worth of the diagnosis. But it is the part of a fool blindly to suffer evils to take their course. We may be right to wait and to observe, but there is a thing still which it cannot be wrong to remember. Radical plans of reform, if we suppose Darwinism to be right, are very certainly for the most part not radical at all. They may alleviate, or again they may aggravate, the symptoms, but most assuredly they cannot touch the real disease. And Darwinism, if it cared to quote Greek, might remind us of what everywhere is still the mark of the quacksalver and the mountebank,

*θρηνεῖν ἐπὶ ὁδὸς πρὸς τομῶντι πῆματι.*

But, for myself as a bystander, there are some feelings which I am not careful to hide. I am oppressed by the ineffectual cruelty of our imprisonments. I am disgusted at the inviolable sanctity of the 'noxious lunatic'. The right of the individual to spawn without restriction his diseased offspring on the community, the duty of the state to rear them are changing every day, and in great part unfavourably. The positive checks to population, in the shape of hardship and disease, acted as a selection of stronger varieties; and these checks every day are lessened. It is far easier now for weak and diseased specimens to survive and to breed. The struggle again, if we retain free trade in reproduction together with protection of the results, is becoming largely a mere struggle between rival fertilities. And from this competition the morally superior more and more refrain. I do not think that in the past such conditions have ever prevailed.

wholesale and without limit an unselected progeny—such duties and rights are to my mind a sheer outrage on Providence. A society that can endure such things will merit the degeneracy which it courts. More and more on certain points we seem warned to return in part to older and to less impracticable principles of conduct. And there are views of Plato which, to me at least, every day seem less of an anachronism and more of a prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since this article was written, I have read a criticism on myself by the Rev. H. Rashdall in this *Journal*, October, 1891. Mr. Rashdall appears to me to misunderstand the view which he attacks. He takes me to hold an 'intuitive theory of punishment' (p. 22), by which (so far as I can judge) he means a view based on some isolated abstraction. I find this strange, and what is perhaps stranger is that he treats me as teaching that punishment consists in the infliction of pain for pain's sake. At least I am unable otherwise to interpret his language. Now, I certainly said that punishment is the suppression of guilt, and so of the guilty person. But I pointed out that negation is not a good, except so far as it belongs to and is the other side of positive moral assertion (*E.S.* 27 = 25). Pain, of course, usually does go with the negative side of punishment, just as some pleasure, I presume, attends usually the positive side. Pain is, in brief, an accident of retribution, but certainly I never made it more, and I am not aware that I made it even an inseparable accident. If a criminal defying the law is shot through the brain, are we, if there is no pain, to hold that there is no retribution? My critic seems, if I may say so, to hold an 'intuitive theory' of my views.

Starting, as it seems to me, from such misapprehensions, Mr. Rashdall's criticism does not appear to myself to hit the mark; and I will therefore not attempt to meet it in detail, but will merely add a few remarks on punishment by the state. Punishment does not rest on an abstraction, but is the reaction of a moral organism, and this organism in every case has a particular concrete character; and what is punished is, of course, always a revolt of a special and concrete nature. Surely, therefore, the varying amounts of the reactions required will follow naturally in accordance with the general principle. It is the welfare of the special state which, of course, decides the amount of ill-desert. And I find, again, no difficulty in the increase or diminution of the penalty by considerations other than those of desert. But, since the welfare of the state is used in punishment as the criterion of desert, I would remark that such increase or diminution may be less than is imagined. Still, I admit it, as for example in the case of pardon, and I consider that it occasions no real difficulty. It is a mere instance of the collision of rights and duties, and of a superior duty and right to be here unjust. All that is required is that (if pressed) we should admit that such a modified penalty is not strict punishment.

In short, I should have little to correct in the old statement of my view except a certain number of one-sided and exaggerated expressions.



## VIII

### THE LIMITS OF INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL SELF-SACRIFICE<sup>1</sup>

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**W**HAT are the limits of self-sacrifice? How far and on what principle is a man or a nation to give up welfare or existence? I will try first to state the principle of self-sacrifice, I will point out next some prejudices which obscure this principle, and will then show the general mode of its application.

I shall here assume that self-sacrifice can exist and also may be right. And the question is on what principle is self-sacrifice right, and is there a limit at which it becomes wrong? The general principle is perhaps not hard to lay down. To sacrifice one's self is to destroy or diminish one's personal existence, and this by itself is not good. Mere self-destruction, whether partial or complete, is not desirable. Self-sacrifice is right if the loss is sustained with a view to a greater gain, and otherwise it is wrong. We must assume that what I forgo is of value, for, if it were worth nothing, it could not be a sacrifice. Supposing, then, that I lose it for something worth no more, my action is not right, and if I lose it for something worth less, my action is wrong and may be immoral. This is the principle, and to this there will perhaps be no objection. The conflict of opinion arises in part from difficulties in the application, but it comes mainly, I think, from the interference of moral prejudices. There are one-sided points of view not subordinated to the governing principle, and we must next proceed to see what these are.

I will begin with the self-styled 'Christian' party, who profess to base their morality on the New Testament. But

<sup>1</sup> This paper was written in 1878 or 1879. Apart from abbreviation it has been left much in its original form. [Note by the author.]

whether it is really more Christian to follow or to ignore the teaching of the Gospels I shall not discuss.

Let us then examine this 'Christian' point of view, and ask if there is here any limit to self-sacrifice. There is no limit whatever. The soul of every man is worth so much that they are all worth the same. They have cost the same price and their value is equal. And there is no end for the individual but to avoid the torment and to gain the bliss both for himself and others, and these two objects emphatically are not two but one. My interest is indivisible from the interest of others, for I can save myself only by seeking to save also my brother. Hence competition disappears; for if I struggled merely for myself, I should lose myself certainly.

This theory is simple, but it is fatally defective. Self-sacrifice seems unlimited, but it really is impossible. A man cannot give up his good where he has no good to give up. The temporal existence which you sacrifice you declare to be worthless; indeed, you naively urge that as a reason for sacrificing it. But apart from this existence you sacrifice nothing. What is the living self-development of an individual or nation? What is the beauty and the good of human being? You have made it all dross, or stumbling-blocks, or means of probation. The end is in the *other* world, and that means it is taken out of this world; and that means that life is worthless or immoral.

Where the self is worth nothing, self-sacrifice is surely impossible. And, again, it is only where no man has any value that all men have equal value. When there is an end and a worth in this world men become unequal, for they must realize the end in different degrees. Hence Christianity in the above sense cannot be reconciled with morality; and let us proceed to examine another false point of view. We may call it the doctrine of one-sided patriotism, or national morality.

Worldly existence is here in itself desirable. The life of the individuals in the community and of the community in the individuals, the development of humanity in the organism of the state, is the end. Self-sacrifice of the

member is demanded and limited by the good of the body. If the body requires it he develops himself, and if the body requires it he suppresses himself. Thus, self-sacrifice for the good of the state is right, and for any other end is wrong. Outside the state there is no moral self-sacrifice, because outside there is no good. And there is, of course, no international morality.

But human duties cannot be limited to the sphere of the state. And hence this view, like the 'Christian' view, is one-sided and false, nor could either be consistently followed. And yet both creeds to-day own their thoughtless adherents. There is a 'Christian' party and a party of 'British interests'. But the 'Christian' politician never asks whether, if war is contrary to the gospel, politics also are not contrary. And the man who denies international right, and preaches tribal morality, can hardly be consistent. Neither party is in earnest with the principle on which it orders us to act.

But these doctrines are combined and confused in a third view more common than either. I must now examine this, but I confess I do not know what to call it. For the name of 'Humanitarian' is too good to be more than lent for the occasion.

The elements which enter into this creed are (1) the idea of personal and national self-development, (2) the doctrine of universal love and self-sacrifice, and (3) the principle of the value of the individual. It may be said to start with the morality of the state, to widen this so as to take in humanity, and to qualify it further by the idea of unlimited self-sacrifice, adding also a notion of the infinite worth and equality of all men. And the practical conclusion is that nations, like men, all have equal rights, that they should all be governed by law, and none selfishly struggle for advantage, and that neither peoples nor individuals may be exterminated, but in any case must be respected.

This creed is identified with much that is noble; but it is inconsistent, deficient, and in part downright false. It approves of self-development, but it condemns self-assertion, the struggle of competition without which there

is no development. It extends the range of state morality, but leaves out one factor of that morality, and it transplants others beyond the conditions of their existence. And, borrowing from religion the value of the individual, it seeks to use that value falsely elsewhere. I will go through these points, and will begin with the worth of the individual.

The equality, or, again, the absolute value of individuals, is not a principle which holds between man and man or nation and nation. On the contrary, the end being the development of human nature, those who have the force, and who judge this course to be conducive to the end, may exterminate or make any use of both men and nations. For the end is superior to the individual, and it is right to act for this end to the best of one's judgement. And, if so, the conclusion must follow as above. The end *does* justify the means, and cannot fail to do so, unless either the means are not essential, or the end itself not desirable or at least not paramount. But the end we are speaking of here is absolute.

There is a sense in which all men have equal and incomparable value, but this sense falls outside the world of morality. The inner moral values of men may not be comparable, but you cannot from this conclude that they are equal. It is only before God that men become equal, and even thus their equality is but partial. As ideally one with the Divine Will they all are equal, but as diverse functions of that Will they become unequal. Where there is a performance there are degrees, and where men come into relation there is an outward performance which can be compared. And religious equality is here no truth, but has become a superstition.

And leaving these abstract considerations, if we take the case of criminals within, or savages without, the community, it surely may be right to abolish their existence. The principle we act on no doubt can be misused by the immoral. It can furnish a pretext for blind persecution or selfish aggrandizement. And the progress of humanity being furthered by the diversity of its elements, it is desir-

able in general that individuals should develop their natures. And this shows a presumption against the extinction or hindrance of man or nation. But it does not prove that in some cases we are not morally bound to accomplish it.

The early Christians were right to insist on the sacredness of life and on the equality of all men, but for us now these ideas have a subordinate position. To the Christians men were equal, because in the other world their value was infinite and in this world nothing. For the development of human nature was not to them desirable. But for us that development is a good thing and an end in itself. And, this being so, we have left the one ground on which individuals are sacred. In getting a *temporal* value they have acquired a *relative* value, and that relative value, measured by the end, may demand their suppression. It thus, for practical purposes, is wrong to maintain the equal or absolute value of individuals unless we are prepared to hold that human nature in itself is worthless. And with this we pass to the remaining elements of 'Humanitarianism'.

This, we saw, extends national morality to the world. The relations of states are to be those of men in a state; and here we have at once false analogy. This creed, again, ignores the principle of self-assertion which is sanctioned by the state; and here is defective analogy. And, in preaching unlimited self-sacrifice, it runs counter to sound morality.

Beginning with the false analogy, and considering the moral relations of citizens and of states, I will recall some familiar points of difference. In a nation the law is supported by force. There is a sovereign, which by its executive carries out the laws and compels the unwilling. But there is no international sovereign now, and there may never be any. And a nation has courts for the settlement of differences, while international courts seem hardly possible. The absence of an executive would make them idle, and this is not all. A national court is presumed morally to represent its citizens. It stands on the common morality

of the litigants, and has no selfish interests. But an international tribunal could not be presumed to be always representative or even disinterested. And it is doubtful if international law can be said really to exist.

I shall be told, no doubt, that the absence of a sovereign, and judicature, and executive, makes no difference to our duties. But surely that must depend on what our duties are. Unless we believe in some *a priori* rights of human beings as such, it is the conditions of our lives which make our duties and rights, and if you remove the conditions the duties are removed. To take men's goods without their consent, we are told for instance, is stealing, and stealing is stealing whether with individuals or nations, and whether you have laws or none. But this is all erroneous. Stealing is an offence against property, but there is no absolute reason why property should exist; and in a communistic state it might not exist. It is in the end the state which decides whether I am to have property, and fixes the conditions on which I am to hold it. And to say that the removal of these circumstances leaves things where they were seems really irrational. Mine is mine, no doubt, and yours is yours; but then, *what* is mine and yours, and how, where there are no laws, can that question be answered? I am not denying here the existence of right between states; but to take the moral rules we find existing between citizens, and, turning these into abstractions, to apply them recklessly everywhere and anywhere, I urge, is indefensible.

Thus we cannot argue in general from civic to international morality, and in particular we cannot transport the duty of self-sacrifice unaltered into the world at large. A man owes a debt to his country, but a nation may feel it owes nothing to some other nation. Duty to one's neighbour remains, but then who is one's neighbour? Within the community he is another representative of the same ideas, and I can believe, when I sacrifice myself, that my life survives in the whole, and that the common spirit gains by my loss. Can a state say this of a neighbour alien in race and alien in ideas? Or may not self-

sacrifice bring here no advantage, and but result in fruitless waste?

In such points the analogy from citizens to nations is false. But this analogy, we have now to see, is also deficient. Within the state there is a principle opposed to self-sacrifice; and reasoning from men to nations, we could not say that self-sacrifice is unlimited, for the self-assertion of the citizen is a moral duty.

The welfare of another, just because it is another's, is not better than mine, and the consequences which would follow are grossly absurd. Nor is it much less absurd to teach that self-sacrifice should stop nowhere, or that the well-being of any one is as good as that of any one else. Doubtless, the mere fact that he is he, and I am I, ought to make no difference, and it is foolish indeed in any one to suppose that it could. But if you mean that *the kind of man he is* should make no difference, and that he may not, because of this, get in front of another, you have passed from verbiage to falsehood. The good of the whole is the end, and the competition of the individuals is a means, for if the best do not come to the front there is general loss. And so the community sanctions self-assertion, and it lays down the limits and conditions of self-seeking. You may not kill or steal, but you may struggle against one another for existence. To empty a man's till is forbidden, but to bring him to beggary by competition may often be laudable. 'Unto him that hath shall be given' and 'reward for merit' are not principles of self-sacrifice, but, within limits, they are principles approved by the state.

And the rule of self-assertion must also hold between nations. Our 'Christian' free-traders forbid us to take the goods of a nation by force; but to undersell it in its markets, and to drive it out of its trade, seems one more illustration of the precepts of the gospel. For, 'this is not selfish, and it will be better for all in the end. In the pacific contest of free-trade my gain or loss is still one with my neighbour's, and *we* need not raze the commandment "Thou shalt not covet", for coveting is impossible.'

But even if competition in trade is ultimately for the

good of humanity, it is hard to believe that the advantage must come to every man. Men and nations take time to find the better trade they have been compelled to seek. They suffer in the process, and they do not always survive it. And while their competitor is gaining, he surely sometimes must gain what they lose, and after all has sought his own at the expense of his neighbour.

Thus, within limits, self-seeking is desirable among nations, and the question is solely about these limits. It is easy to talk of law, and to assert that war between states is to be judged like violence within states; but this is merely to fall into the old false analogy. The state sanctions the principle of self-assertion, and qualifies it to suit with civic conditions. But, conditions being different, the principle of competition may have a different range. If a nation narrows that range and excludes itself from foreign commerce, why should it not do so? But if, again, it carries self-assertion beyond the limits allowed in civil life, once more, is this immoral? It may sound fine to say, 'Competition is one thing and war is another', but it is not easy to draw a distinction in principle.

Selfishness is not wicked, for the state encourages its citizens to be selfish; and violence is not wicked, for the state is violent towards its citizens. War is not *illegal* violence if there is no law which condemns it, and we might even say that such a law must be founded on war. It is here that our 'Humanitarians' make a terrible mistake, for if international law is ever to be real, it must have an executive. But an executive must mean force, and force between nations is war. When a majority have become agreed that on certain points they will compel refractory states, the law of nations will be a reality. And thus, if war goes out, it will surely be by way of war, by an irresistible armed consensus with force in reserve. But what, if so, shall we say to the 'Humanitarian' who cries Peace at any price? Shall we answer, There is but one Humanitarian and one friend of peace—the man who is for war in the name of Humanity?

We have found that the equal value of individuals is an



illusion, and that the analogy from the citizen to the nation is invalid. The end is general perfection, and for this end, certainly, self-sacrifice may be required. But duties within the state being specially determined, to extend these beyond their conditions is indefensible; for, like other general truths, the general truths of ethics are conditional. And beside this mistake we found also another. The analogy from civil life does not show that self-sacrifice is unlimited, but it shows, on the contrary, that within limits self-assertion is valid.

But our 'Christian' party, I suppose, will have a word for us. 'You have proved', they may say, 'that self-assertion is recognized by worldly morality, but the morality of the Gospel is the ultimate standard.' And on this point I think we should understand one another. If 'Christianity' is to mean the taking the Gospels as our rule of life, then we none of us are Christians and, no matter what we say, we all know we ought not to be. If Greek morality was one-sided, that of the New Testament is still more one-sided, for it implies that the development of the individual and the state is worthless. It is not merely that it contemns victory over the forces of nature, that it scorns beauty and despises knowledge, but there is not one of our great moral institutions which it does not ignore or condemn. The rights of property are denied or suspected, the ties of the family are broken, there is no longer any nation or patriotism, and the union of the sexes becomes a second-rate means against sin. Universal love doubtless is a virtue, but tameness and baseness—to turn the cheek to every rascal who smites it, to suffer the robbery of villains and the contumely of the oppressor, to stand by idle when the helpless are violated and the land of one's birth in its death-struggle, and to leave honour and vengeance and justice to God above—are qualities that deserve some other epithet. The morality of the primitive Christians is that of a religious sect; it is homeless, sexless, and nationless. The morality of to-day rests on the family, on property, and the nation. Our duty is to be members of the world we are in; to be in the world and not of it was

their type of perfection. The moral chasm between us is, in short, as wide as the intellectual; and if it has been politic to ignore this, I doubt if it is politic any longer. We have lived a long time now the professors of a creed which no one consistently can practise, and which, if practised, would be as immoral as it is unreal.

Self-assertion, we have now seen, is as right as self-sacrifice, and at this point we may notice another mistake. It is no true deduction from Mr. Darwin's views if any one maintains the morality of mere national selfishness. For the mere fact of self-assertion and the acting on the principle of self-assertion are, in the first place, not the same. And, further, in the beginnings of morality among gregarious animals this fact of self-assertion itself has visibly suffered a change. The struggle of the community against outsiders plainly holds a place by the struggle of the individuals within the community. And how can we consistently set up tribal morality and a mere struggle between states as ultimate, when within tribal morality the principle of selfishness is not paramount? If there the law of self-assertion has ceased to be supreme, its supremacy, where states are concerned, is the merest assumption. The progress which has limited the struggle of the citizens will limit, we may rather suppose, the struggle of states, and self-assertion will everywhere be reduced to an element in a higher morality.

And here we may take leave of the one-sided ideas we have criticized. The end we take to be the development of human nature. This principle necessitates self-sacrifice, since its way may be through the loss of individuals. And it necessitates self-assertion, since only thus can the end be reached at all. It subordinates both, and their limits can be stated in general. It is possible that a man or a state can develop self best by serving others most, and here the question disappears. Again, a man or state, by giving up private good, may do most for the end; and here self-sacrifice becomes a duty. But if by self-assertion, to the loss or even extinction of others, a man or a state considers that it most profits humanity, there self-sacrifice is immoral.

These truths seem too obvious to require explanation, but they are so constantly misunderstood that I venture to dwell on them. Suppose, first, that we have one single nation; the perfection of human nature within that nation will be the end. The good of each man here for the most part should coincide with that of others, but wholly it cannot and should not coincide. For without competition the community grows effete through the loss of vigorous individuals. The worthless are not pushed aside, and the fittest do not come to the front. And hence, if I am the fittest to have advantage, it is my duty to take it. But on the same principle there are cases where self-sacrifice should be welcomed. Self-sacrifice is an end in general where it results in a greater gain, and it is an end to the loser so far as he identifies himself with that which gains. But in itself self-sacrifice is an evil, and there is always some presumption against it. To give up life or possessions or talents for the sake of others may be immoral.

And the same thing holds between nations. Each gains generally, but not always, by the gain of all. Some competition, and hence self-assertion to the loss of another, may thus at times be right. And at other times, for the sake of humanity, a nation should deny itself. National self-sacrifice, as compared with civic, has a wider object but a narrower exercise. It is hard for a state to judge that its loss is balanced by general gain. And nations differ in value, and there is no organism to ensure that loss of one shall advantage the others. The influence of example is weak where public spirit has hardly an existence. And (sophistic as it may sound) the readiness in a nation for self-sacrifice would be an argument in favour of its self-assertion.

The general principle seems plain, but does not carry us far. A nation must aim at the good of mankind and at peace in the end; but, as things are, this principle will in some cases justify violence, and even extermination. For, beside the principle which establishes the end, there can be no absolute law; and the means to this end cannot be fixed beforehand. And such means certainly need not always

consist in abstinence from war or even from aggression. Our first hope at present is an international executive enforcing the morality of the best; but, if that is to exist, then the best must agree, and must be the strongest. And strength means war in reserve. We may look beyond this possibly to a better state of things, but the first seems the only road to the second. The meek will *not* inherit the earth, and a nation which claims morality must be ready to use force in defence of right.

It is idle to denounce this view as the trumpeting of a bellicose policy or the glorification of blood and pillage. This view necessitates the belief that a war begun thoughtlessly or selfishly is a crime. It is hostile only to the reckless application of one-sided principles. We remind the party of 'British interests' that a cynical self-seeking is immoral, and that a nation which adopts it may lose one source of strength. To the peace-at-any-price manufacturer we remark that a thing may be worth more than what it fetches in the market; and we say to either the 'Christian' politician or the covert Quaker that, while on other points he ignores the teaching of the Gospels, he is a hypocrite if he tries to teach us our duty on this. And we beg the sentimentalist to remember that, after all, force rules the world, and that self-assertion, after all, is a condition of welfare.

It would be a good day if in England we could gain some clearer ideas about selfishness and patriotism; if we could learn to abstain from insincere professions and from sickening cant. We might then, perhaps, remember that, when trade is gone and manufactures perished, the memory of a nation that has strengthened itself, and dared to risk something in the cause of humanity, is not so easily lost.

## IX

### ON THE ANALYSIS OF COMPARISON

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THE interesting paper on 'Comparison', which Mr. Sully has published in *Mind*,<sup>1</sup> suggests some fruitful lines of inquiry. And there is one point, and that one of capital importance, on which I should be glad to add a few remarks, fragmentary and, no doubt, in other ways defective. This point is the *analysis* of the comparing function.

Mr. Sully has, of course, not omitted this question. He has pointed out certain features in the act of Comparison; but I do not find what can be called an attempt to resolve the product into its elements. I will, however, not criticize where it is probable that I do not understand, but will pass to Mr. Sully's description of the act.

'The term Comparison may be roughly defined as that act of the mind by which it concentrates attention on two mental contents in such a way as to ascertain their relation of similarity or dissimilarity' (490). 'Comparison is a mode of intellectual activity involving voluntary attention' (498). 'But it is an act of attention of a very special kind' (492). In this description there are two points which call for remark. In the first place I should doubt if *voluntary* attention is essential to comparison. This is a matter of observation, or perhaps only of wording; but the second point is one connected with principle. Comparison is called 'an act of attention of a very special kind', and this at once suggests a difficulty. If the special essences of the various intellectual functions are to be referred to differences in the kind of attention, then these kinds of attention should be described and enumerated, and, if possible, developed from the simple form. But if the differences in attention come rather from the different objects we attend

<sup>1</sup> *M. O.S. I.* 489-511.

to, then the speciality of the various intellectual functions must be looked for in themselves, and cannot come from varieties in attention. But I should confess that on the subject of voluntary attention, and of the position it holds in mental development, I am unable to understand Mr. Sully's teaching.

I will now offer the remarks which I have to make on the analysis of Comparison. We may say that the mind acts on two data in such a way as to ascertain their similarity or dissimilarity. Well now, what is this way? The mind passes of course from one object to the other, but then *how* does it pass and *what* crosses in the passage? If we use technical terms, we may answer as follows. Comparison is the (unreflective) subsumption of one datum under the other reciprocally, or the apperception of each by the other in turn. Having data A and B, we pass from A to B with A in our minds as our leading idea, and then return to A with B in our minds as the idea which predominates. The result is that the diversities are brought into collision and so into notice, and that the identities are both reinforced by blending and also set free by the struggle of their competing differences. The process is either general or special. We may use, that is, the whole content of A or B, or but one special feature or aspect of each.

Now what operates in the above is the suggested idea of the identity in diversity, or diversity in identity, of A and B. This idea it is which (by redintegration) causes the process which brings about its own reality. If the comparison is intentional, the idea will have been there and have led from the first. But it may arise accidentally. Having A and B before me and casually passing from one to the other, I may perceive an identity or difference. This may interest and, becoming a dominant idea, may set up the process of alternate subsumption.

Thus in Comparison proper we have two data A and B, we have an idea of their identity and diversity which interests, and an ensuing process of alternate subsumption. We may have in addition an idea of this process. But

before Comparison proper is developed the process cannot be set up by the idea of its result. We have then simply an identity felt in our data, which seeks in vain (by red-integration) to particularize itself in one as it does in the other, and so causes a collision.

It will, I hope, tend to clear up this rapid sketch if I try to show how Comparison is developed. Let us suppose that a child, or some other animal, has eaten a number of lumps of sugar. The result will be that, when a hard white lump is presented to its sense, that lump will be qualified by the idea of sweetness. But the lump now presented is a piece of salt, and what follows is a shock of discrepancy and pain. The question is whether this shock will subside and pass away, or be retained and lead to an advance. Let us suppose that it is retained. The suggested idea of sweetness is so strong that again and again the whiteness of the salt leads to attempt and disgust. But in this way a new connexion of whiteness and saltiness will be formed in the mind.

Let the salt still remain, and let us offer beside it new pieces of sugar (while constantly changing the local positions), and let appetite be urgent. What will happen now may be a passage to the sugar with a certain idea of saltiness, and to the salt with a certain idea of sweetness, and in each case a failure. The identical white leads to both, and the last presentation to sense in each case fills up the idea, and the result is perplexity. I think the issue may be as follows.

We are to suppose that in the sugar is a glittering appearance which is absent from the salt. These differences may not have been perceived, or at least noticed, and may have so far remained inoperative. But as attention grows through desire and pain, let this attribute become more prominent, and let it pass into the idea with which the animal goes from the sugar to the salt. On this a fresh collision will take place. And another discrepancy will be felt when the idea of the dull salt collides with the sensation of glittering sweetness. The two pieces now, while held together by their identical attributes, are forced

apart by their differences, and in this passage between them the diversities become explicit.

This I believe to be the way in which Comparison is developed. Its result, the perception of mixed identity and diversity, becomes, as an idea, the means for setting up the process which has yielded it. The chance result of groping is what gives the source of voluntary movement.

There are doubtless objections which will be taken to this fragmentary outline, but of these most will, I think, be founded on errors. I have dealt with some of them in my *Principles of Logic*, but there is one I may point out here. It will perhaps be said that my explanation is circular, since classification and comparison exist from the first and are implied in the earliest form of recognition. But the facts, as I find them both in general and in particular, are irreconcilable with this view—a view which, I believe, rests much less on observation than on preconceived ideas. And if an objector replies, But the comparison is yet 'latent', it is 'virtual', it is 'nascent', it is only 'potential'—that moves me not at all. I must be allowed to say openly that such ambiguous phrases have, until they are explained, no right to exist in a scientific psychology, and that if they were explained their attraction would vanish. I have found that an assertion of 'potential' existence often stands for a 'nascent' perception of error; and in that sense it is welcome.

But I trust to meet with the general approval of psychologists when I say that in analysis there is still much to be done.



## X

### IS THERE ANY SPECIAL ACTIVITY OF ATTENTION?

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THE question I have placed at the head of this article may serve to define its subject-matter. Is Attention, so far as it is *psychical* activity, an original element, and is there any specific function of attention? The strict result of the English analytical school would give a negative answer to both these questions. With that denial I agree, and I have not been able to find sufficient reason to doubt its truth. Active attention is not primary, either as being there from the first or as supervening, but is a derivative product. Nor again, I should add, is there any one special activity at all, but various activities, if they lead to one result, are called attending. This is the doctrine which this paper is written to defend, or rather to press upon the reader's notice. The whole subject is so difficult and is so implicated with other branches of psychology, that to treat of it fully is not possible here, even if in my case it were possible anywhere. My chief object is to record a kind of protest. I observe a tendency to break up the life of the soul, to divide it into active and passive factors, or to suppose a passive beginning with a supervening activity, the latter by some identified with an irreducible act of attention. I believe this tendency to be a serious obstacle to psychology, and there is another tendency not less injurious. Attention may be given such a position that the reader cannot tell if it is primary or derivative, or, if primary, whether it is an original element or something that supervenes; or, again, whether it is one of a class of activities, or itself a class of different activities, or one function exerted on different objects. And my purpose is first to ask why we should desert the conclusion that attention is a product; and, if we must desert it, to urge that

the alternative should at least be stated distinctly. The attention I am to speak of is *active* attention.

Attention (whatever it may be besides) at any rate means predominance in consciousness. Some element or elements, sensational or ideal, become prominent from the rest and seem to lower them in strength, if they do not entirely exclude them from notice. That which we attend to is said to engross us. 'The expression means that a sensation tends more or less strongly to exclude from consciousness all other sensations.'<sup>1</sup> Not theorizing but applying descriptive metaphors, we may call attention a state which implies domination or chief tenancy of consciousness. Or we may compare it to the focusing of an optical instrument, or to the area of distinct vision in the retinal field.<sup>2</sup> Now in active attention we produce this condition (there is no doubt of that), and the question is how we are able to do this, or what is the machinery which effects the production. In order to answer this question, we must first make a general survey of the facts.

A flash of lightning by night, the report of a firearm, the sudden prick of a knife, or a violent internal pain, all these for the moment so occupy our notice that everything else becomes feeble or is banished. I shall not ask *how* it is that these intruders prevail, whether there is one cause or various ones, and, if so, how they are related.<sup>3</sup> Nor shall

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated from J. S. Mill on James Mill's *Analysis of the Human Mind*, ii. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, *Met.*, i. 238, Lotze, *Med. Psych.*, 505, and (later) Wundt, *Phys. Psych.*, ii. 206. I may take this opportunity of saying that I have considered Wundt's doctrine of Apperception and am unable to adopt it, perhaps because I have failed to understand it.

<sup>3</sup> There is mere strength, pleasure and pain, and habit, including under that head inherited predispositions as well as the attractions of familiarity and change. How these stand to one another is matter of controversy which does not concern us. Stumpf, *Tonpsych.*, i. 71, is inclined to doubt the fact of attention's always strengthening, partly on the ground that in that case it would falsify observation. But, in the first place, since strength of course is relative, the observed relation might for more than one reason remain unaltered. And, in the second place, there is a most important point to be considered, to which it seems to me that Stumpf has hardly done justice. This is the distinction between the strength of a perception as a psychical

I inquire if we here can be said to attend or are active in any sense. I think no one would say that we ourselves *produced* the tyranny of these assailants. Let us then go on to the states where we are certainly somehow active. When the ears are erected or the eyes opened or moved, and these reflex acts increase the power of one sensation against other mental elements, I do not know if we properly are said to attend. And, though there is a kind of 'activity', yet assuredly there is here no active attention. For no psychical activity at all is present, or in any case none which produces the dominance of one mental element. Still, if the reader objects, I will not at present insist. He will agree that these reflexes are but one amongst other sorts of attention, and I will therefore pass on.

We come next to a class where the activity is still muscular, a muscular activity exerted upon a percipient organ directly, or indirectly as by turning the body. But in addition we have here a preceding idea and (according to one view) a feeling which moves. A visible object for example suggests, indirectly or directly, ideas and feelings which lead to our fixing it, and that fixation makes the perception of the object predominant and steady. There are many stages in this class, and we shall all agree that in some of them we have an active attention. There is a question in fact whether attention is much *more*, and to that question we shall be obliged to return.

We come next to a number of cases of attention where muscular activity seems not essential. But in all of these state and the strength which is perceived by means of the perception. If we consider ideas, it seems hopeless to contend that the idea (e.g.) of a strong or weak pleasure or pain must always itself *be* a strong or weak state of mind. Such an example as the tranquil recollection of a tooth-drawing would at once confute us. And if this is so with ideas, it will, I think, be so still when we come to perceptions. The difference between the state and its ideal content will hold good there also. It will be possible to have a perception of violence which itself is not violent, and of feebleness which itself is not weak. The degree will be a character distinguishable from and contained in the whole state of perception, which latter may in some other way vary in strength while the degree remains the same. But how this can be possible is a most difficult question with which I do not feel myself at present competent to deal.

an *idea* must be present and appears to operate. A simple instance is the appearance in sensation or perception of an element not striking in itself but with which a dominant idea is associated. If an idea or a mass of ideas are so interesting that they are able to engross us, then the elements connected with them, whether sensible or ideal, may engross us also (cp. J. S. Mill, loc. cit.). Whether perceptions and ideas that attract us by their strangeness belong to this class I shall not inquire, nor for the present shall I ask what 'interesting' means. What must engage us is the doubt if in this class we have everywhere *active* attention. When a thought, as we say, is much in our minds, and we dwell upon everything that suits with its presence and supports its rule, we do not know of any *act*, since all comes of itself. 'If I am active,' we should ask, 'what is it that I do?', and it is better therefore to go on to clearer instances. When I retain an idea or keep watch on an object, and still more when I investigate, I am supposed to act and also to attend, since my thoughts are confined to one main subject. But is this active attention? When for example at this moment I write about attention, I am active, no doubt, and I presume attending; but if you ask me whether I actively attend, I hesitate for an answer. For, if I am well and not distracted, attention seems of itself to wait upon my other activity, and, if it does not come because of it, seems to come spontaneously. It is otherwise where I have resolved to attend to some matter and still persevere. We have here the attention that proclaims itself active, and there is more than one variety. I may simply intend to occupy my mind with a certain subject, or may resolve in particular to be active upon it in such or such a manner.

Let us enumerate the results of the above survey. In the first place (1) we may have resolved to attend, or (2) to effect some mental operation which involves attention. We may also (3) perform the same act without intention or resolve, and again, where we are not conscious of action, (4) a dominant idea may lend its force to a connected element. Once more (5) a muscular act, itself the result

of idea (and perhaps feeling), may cause the predominance of sensation or idea; or (6) a sensation may be fixed by a simple reflex; or (7) lastly some element may predominate by what seems its own superior energy. The last two varieties, I think, must now be dismissed. They have of course great psychological importance, but it seems evident that they are not *active* attention.

I shall go on to attempt a clearance of the ground by dealing with the claim of muscular action; for if this contained the essence of active attention, our task would be shortened. The 'Will', it may be said, controls the voluntary muscles (and them alone), and the voluntary muscles by acting on the organs control sensation. And when we attend to an idea, and when the muscles do *not* move, yet the Will still controls. For in the idea attended to is 'a muscular element', and this 'mental, or revived, image occupies the same place in the brain and other parts of the system as the original sensation did' (Bain, *Emotions*, 370). Hence the Will is enabled to direct itself to the idea, and so to control it; and in this way the activity of attention is explained.

But this view will not bear an impartial scrutiny. I say nothing about the physiological hypothesis on which it seems to hang, and I will not ask whether, if the facts were as alleged, the explanation would be sufficient; for the facts are largely otherwise.<sup>1</sup> I attend to various visceral sensations, I attend to a single instrument in an orchestra, I attend to the several components of a smell, I attend to colour and not shape, and I attend in one colour, such as greenish-blue, to the blue or to the green; but it is needless to go on. There is according to the theory 'a muscular intervention' in all these cases. And this cannot mean merely that in all there exists *some* 'muscular element', for this (if true) would be perfectly *irrelevant*. The fact to be explained is my attending to A or B and not to C or D, and unless there are special 'muscular elements' *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, the fact is not explained. But, if such elements are everywhere postulated, then I think I may say that, when the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Lotze, *Med. Psych.*, 509.

physiologists and the anatomists have been converted, it will be time enough for the psychologist to inquire. On the other hand, if, as I presume, Professor Bain makes no such postulate, then I am unable to see how the theory can touch the fact to be explained.

Active attention does not consist merely in muscular innervation, and, if so, we must go on to look elsewhere. But I should like to say first that it seems to me most doubtful if attention *must* have even a muscular concomitant. I do not deny that early in development this is so, and I do not deny that, if attention reaches a certain degree of strength, there is some muscular accompaniment, such as frowning. But in my actual experience, when I pass from inattention to a direction of my thoughts, I cannot verify the *universal* presence of a muscular element; and I know no good *a priori* proof of that presence. I should add that to me this question seems to be merely one of fact, and to have no other psychological importance.<sup>1</sup>

We have now surveyed, and to some extent have cleared, our ground, and the best course will, I think, be rapidly to go through the rest of our cases, and to ask in each if we require a specific activity of attention. After this and in conclusion we will deal with some particular difficulties.

Let us first take the case where a sensation engrosses us, though not directly, and where yet we are not conscious of any activity. What operates here will be a connected idea; for the idea engrosses, and what goes with it will therefore engross us also. We, I presume, are all agreed that ideas and that groups of ideas may interest. In what interest consists is a difficult question. It is, I think, quite certain that it consists to a large extent in pleasure and pain, but that it always consists in nothing else, or that pleasure or pain *must* always be present, seem both to me improbable.

<sup>1</sup> Some psychologists appear to be so taken by the idea of our voluntary muscles that they seem at times to forget the existence of such things as glands and skin and mucous membranes. I would refer the reader specially to those chapters in Dr. Tuke's *Influence of the Mind upon the Body* which deal with the action of the intellect upon the involuntary muscles and the organic functions; or see Carpenter's *Mental Physiology*.

But for the purpose of this article I shall assume that what interests does so by means of pleasure or pain. Then, if an idea is pleasing, that idea may engross us, and if an indifferent sensation suggests the idea, the idea on its side will affect the sensation and cause it to dominate (cp. J. S. Mill, loc. cit. 372). How it does so is again a question that opens a somewhat wide field. We must content ourselves with the answer that it works by redintegration and also by blending. It is blending when, if two mental elements have got the same content, the intensities of both are more or less combined with a total or partial fusion of the elements. I should say that this process cannot wholly be reduced to redintegration, and whether its existence is compatible with the strict principles of the English school of 'association', I do not know. It of course presents some difficulties in general, and raises a number of interesting problems. But, without dwelling on these questions, we may lay down the result that, if an idea engrosses, then any sensation which is connected with that idea may in consequence engross. And attention so far has appeared to consist in interest, either direct or transferred; an account which, we shall find, will hold good everywhere (cp. Waitz, *Lehrbuch*, 634-7).

Let us pass on to the cases where we feel an activity. In the first class of these we make no resolve, but, performing an operation, we are occupied with our performance. We are writing or reading, and the subject engrosses us. We, I presume, attend, and we certainly seem active; and the question is, What is such active attention, and does it simply once more consist in interest? I have no doubt that it does. The subject may predominate because of the activity, but the activity itself is produced by interest. Why am I active? Because the function of itself is interesting, or because the idea of the result is dominant. The main idea of the subject favours those activities which further its existence, and it lends them its strength. It naturally selects them. Or the idea of an answer to a question which interests creates uneasiness and a coming up and maintenance of any function which serves to relieve.

The attention is caused by an indirect interest, for that produces the activity whose subject predominates.

There are some objections which, perhaps, before we go on, should be considered here. It may be said first (*a*) that no intellectual activity exists, and secondly (*b*) that the dominant idea could not work. The objections have perhaps not been made in this form, but it will serve to bring out the points of difficulty.

(*a*) If no intellectual activity exists, and if yet there is *some* activity present in intellectual functions, this activity, it would seem, might be attention. It is not possible for me here to discuss the question of intellectual activities, their existence and their origin, and I prefer to reply, If no activity of intellect, then none whatever; for psychology deals simply with psychical processes. I shall return lower down to this general question, but here will assume that the intellect is active.<sup>1</sup> And if so, its activity upon a certain object will (as was said before) result from interest. The objection, however, may be pressed as follows. Let that be the case, it may be said, where the intellect does something; but what where it does nothing and where yet I am active? In the *retention* of an image or in the *watching* of an object I am certainly active; but where is the intellectual product? The product appears to be mere attention and, if so, the activity must be attention also. I must meet this objection by attempting to show the nature of retention and of observation. The feeling of activity I will deal with hereafter.

What is active *retention*? The image of a person will not stay before our minds, or in reflection we fail to keep hold of an idea or maintain a process. We make an effort and succeed, but where is the machinery? The machinery, I answer, consists of an idea which is able to dominate and so fixes an object connected with itself. This idea may be simply the idea of the presence of the idea required. Again it may be some other idea which implies the first and makes a whole with it, a process familiar under the name of Con-

<sup>1</sup> I should say that I decidedly reject the doctrine that active attention consists in comparison. See Lotze, *Metaph.*, 540, *Grundzüge d. Psych.*, 26.



tiguity. This idea will retain partly by means of Red-integration. It has a context which perpetually suggests the idea to be retained as often as that wavers; and this context again is more or less extensive, and therefore self-supporting or self-restoring. And secondly, the idea (as was mentioned before) will strengthen by blending, and so tend to retain. These I think are the means employed for retention; and if so, there is no specific activity. Let us pass to *observation*. When we watch, say a trap, or perhaps a rabbit-hole, or the proceedings in a law-court, what is it that we do? The last example suggests an instructive distinction. When we observe we must do it in a certain interest; but we may either want to see what happens in this or that special way, or generally to see whatever may happen. And the explanation seems simple. The idea of the object changing itself in such or such a manner is an interesting idea, and so naturally causes retention of this object in prominent perception. And where we are said to watch simply, the idea is the same, only now indefinite. If I am told to keep my eye upon anything, the idea of my seeing some change is suggested, and my observation is a case of motivated retention.<sup>1</sup> We may say then that either there is no activity or that the activities (mental or physical) are *not* a specific attending. Attention will be everywhere a mere example of the common processes of mind, and will consist in the influence of a dominant idea.

(b) Or if it is said that this dominant idea could not influence, the answer is easy. It must be admitted that, by what has been called 'Contiguity', the idea of the end both prompts and selects the means which produce it. And the dominance of that idea is surely indisputable. It may not contract the muscles, and may fail even to produce 'a nascent stage of the process of innervation' or 'a tendency

<sup>1</sup> We should avoid the mistake of treating these phenomena as cases of Comparison. They *may* involve Comparison, but cannot do so from the first, since they certainly precede it. At an early stage there are not two things held before the mind, and so Comparison is impossible. They belong to the same class as elementary Recognition, where we find a sameness or difference without knowing what that is.

to strive' (whatever that may mean), and if the reader is committed to such ideas I cannot hope to persuade him. But I would ask others to reflect that we have been willing to suppose that the idea prevails through pleasure and pain, and (if you must say so) through desire. All that is wanted so far for a common understanding is the presence of the idea and the denial that its influence consists in a discharge upon the muscles, whether actual or potential.

'Still,' the objection may come, 'in an act like retention we fix ideas that waver, and we even recall an idea that has vanished. And we are said to do this by "the idea of the idea"'. But an idea must either be there or not there, and cannot be both, unless somehow "potential". So that an idea of an idea is not admissible.' I confess that the phrase has a certain obscurity, and I do not know whether any one has worked out the detail of its various meanings. But it is not hard to make a sufficient reply.<sup>1</sup> It is plain that we have the idea of an idea. We may be asked (e.g.) for our idea of a statesman, and may be answered, 'I do not call that an idea.' 'Tell me then,' we might reply, 'what is *your* idea of an idea of a statesman.' And that means, Give me the general character which such an idea should have. This account will hold good everywhere. The idea of an idea is a psychical state, the character of which is used representatively and contains the feature of being an idea of a certain kind. We may distinguish two varieties. In the first of these the absent idea which I think of is the idea pure and simple, while in the second it will include my psychical state as I have this idea. For example, I possess a general idea of the solution of a problem, and that in the first case contains merely the general character of the answer required, or the principal feature of the necessary process. But if (as in the second case) I think of myself as having the solution or as performing the process, I must represent also the psychical presence of the whole event, of course again only in its general aspect. Thus, if we realized the first idea we should have simply to fill out

<sup>1</sup> I think that Professor Bain has given to a kindred question an answer that is somewhat confused, in a note on James Mill's *Analysis*, ii. 358.

its logical content, but the reality of the second would give us its actual psychical existence. And with this passing notice I must leave an objection which depends upon a vicious theory that would destroy logic wholly and cripple psychology.<sup>1</sup>

To resume then, ideas of ideas are possible, and such ideas can dominate, and the presence of these ideas can produce their own reality. And so far attention has been fully explained as an instance of the working of ordinary laws. But we have still another class of our facts to consider. The cases of attention which so far we have surveyed are in a sense involuntary. In them we had not a resolve to attend. We must now deal with the class where I say 'I will attend to this matter' and do so, or where at all events I resolve to perform such an act as implies attention. At this point, it may be said, our explanation breaks down, and here we have a specific and original activity. All before was automatic, but this is volitional and gives us a direct revelation of energy.

'But an energy that does what?' is the natural reply. I suppose an energy that fixes and strengthens. Well, if so, I am led to remark at once that the presumption is in favour of our old account, because fixation and strengthening was what it explained. If, when I simply attend, that function results from an indirect interest, is it likely that when I resolve to attend we should have to import a wholly new factor and bring upon the stage a supervening agency? Let us examine this more nearly.

When I readily attend to the details of a subject and perform the operations (both physical and mental) that lead to a view of them, or when in general I pursue the means to some end, that, we saw, did not involve any other attention than was explained by the normal working of interest. We must now take the case where, prompted to such application, I am solicited elsewhere, and return to my task after wavering and struggle, perhaps in addition

<sup>1</sup> The unsatisfactory way in which internal volition is dealt with (or ignored by) the mass of psychologists comes in part from an inability to distinguish clearly between the idea of and the reality of an idea.

saying to myself, 'I am resolved to mind my business.' And there is a suggestion, it would seem, that in these cases we are met by a difference of principle. But, we ask, where is this difference? In the struggle of ideas and feelings in my mind, and in the inconstant result, there is nothing surely which calls for special explanation, nor most assuredly is there a consciousness of special activity. And if it is the act of resolve upon which stress is laid, then I fully admit that this function must be recognized as differing from others, but I see no reason to think it one kind by itself or anything but an instance of our general principles. We have seen that what interests occupies our minds, and that it does so directly or indirectly. We have seen that in the latter class we have the working of an idea, and in some cases also the help of an action, physical or intellectual—such action not being an activity of attention in any specific sense. We saw in short that attention, whether we understand it as the state of our being engrossed, or as an action which brings about such a state, was nothing unique, nothing else but a result and an illustration of more general laws. Thus, if we take interest to mean liking, attention comes from liking, my liking for the thing or for something that implies it, the idea of some person to whom I am attached, or of some pursuit or principle more or less abstract. These interests are ideas which, in the normal course of psychical events, work out their detail by a transfer of liking and support that detail against invasion. We shall see that *resolve* does but illustrate this process.

I am to say 'I will attend', and am then in consequence really to attend; and on the other hand in our account attention consisted in indirect interest—interest, that is, in a further idea. But here where is the idea? It is not far to seek. If I resolve to attend, I of course have the idea of myself attending. That is, I have either an idea of myself doing this or that work, which work in fact produces attention, or I have an explicit idea of myself attending to something to which the work is in fact a condition. This idea of myself in such a character dominates by its

pleasure, or its implication with pain, or its force, or its associations (we have agreed to leave this matter unsettled), and it produces in the common psychological way the means to its realization. Where is then the difficulty? I have an idea of myself doing this or that, and such an idea may surely be interesting. Or, if it is not so in itself, there are further ideas of myself accomplishing a whole performance which includes it, pursuing (e.g.) the greatest possible sum of pleasures, or acting upon some other principle of virtue. In short, give me the idea of myself somehow engaged, and let that idea give me, indirectly or directly, a feeling of satisfaction or success or self-approval, or in some manner interest me, then, if this idea is connected with means that lead to its reality, it surely will produce them in the ordinary way. The result of attention will follow the resolve without any mysterious 'act' which intervenes, and the phenomenon is explained by indirect interest. It may be said that the idea works *because* I fix it, and that this fixation *is* attending; but the answer is of course that another idea, a still more remote interest, fixes the first one and sets up the process. And if some arbitrary force proceeding from the self is suggested against me, I can only reply that I do not know what this means. I cannot well discuss phrases which convey to me nothing I can find in fact, and which I am compelled to believe are simply unintelligible.

We have now traversed the field which we set before us, and have offered an account of its main phenomena, defective no doubt, but I trust sufficient to answer our purpose. We have found nothing in attention that is not derivative, nothing which could justify our placing it among the primary elements of mind. In attention there is either no activity at all beyond the common processes of redintegration and blending, or, if the activity exists, itself *is* not attention. Any function whatever of the body or the mind will be active attention if it is prompted by an interest and brings about the result of our engrossment with its product. There is no primary act of attention, there is no specific act of attention, there is no one kind of act of attention at

all. That is our result, and through the rest of this paper I shall consider some objections and attempt to remove some remaining difficulties.

I will first make a remark on the nature of Resolve. When I determine to act, either now or in the future (and perhaps again only in case an uncertain condition is fulfilled), I am aware of a peculiar state of mind. I do not act and yet I feel myself asserted, forefelt (so to speak) in an unreal action. But this state admits of an easy explanation. Apart from its actual realization an idea may possess very many degrees of particularity. Now when the idea of an action is opposed by other states, they prevent it from filling itself out with detail in accordance with the reality at present perceived or imagined in the future. But, as the obstacle is from any cause lessened or removed, this idea will in proportion grow more particular, and, if it cannot lead to action, will be largely filled out by ideal detail. This detail will of course contain feelings the same in character as those which would be present in the real act; but there is no need to explain this by a hypothetical physiology, or to raise a mist with vague phrases such as 'tendency' and 'nascent'. The fact is merely that of these feelings the greater part (if not all) will be less intense than they would be in the action, and a varying amount of them will be wholly absent. Still, enough will be there to give a sense of expansion, such as we feel to accompany our real actions; and this is mistaken for proof of an inner energy, not derived from common sources, but to be referred to a specific act of attention or some other faculty. I should like to work out this point in greater detail, but I have only room to suggest that any intelligent adherent of arbitrary Free-will should do it for himself.

I will pass next to a kindred source of difficulty. 'In attention', I may be told, 'we feel that we are active; we are aware of energy, and we know this directly. In the account which you have given this factor is omitted, since attention comes there as a result from elements that are not active. And we object that the essence of the matter is

omitted since the essence is just this revealed activity.' But I should reply that, if attention is *not* derivative, the right course is to show my mistake in its derivation. If I have either accounted (or am able to account) for every single thing which your 'energy' *performs*, you will hardly persuade me that the feeling you speak of is really effective, or is anything but a concomitant, more or less constant and more or less obscure. And I think that I might fairly leave the matter so. But, since the consciousness of force has been given an importance which is paramount (and I might add transcendent and absolute), it is better to add some further remarks.

I would first suggest that a revelation of activity or of force or of will or of energy (or indeed of anything which answers to a phrase of this sort) is open to dangerous metaphysical criticism. If these ideas can be shown to contradict themselves, then the revelation could be met by an admission of its existence, but also by a denial of the truth of its message; and in England at least I am sure that this criticism has (to speak in general) been merely ignored. I mention this in passing, and I lay no stress on it, since in psychology I do not think such a criticism would be relevant any more than it would be in physics or physiology. But, confining myself to the field of psychology, I utterly deny the alleged revelation. It gives us not a fact but an intellectual construction, and (I should add) a thorough misinterpretation. In the first place I should like to be told *what* it is that the message conveys. Does it tell me of my body or of my mind or of both, and what precisely does it tell me? I have supposed (perhaps wrongly) that psychology is a science which deals with psychical events and the laws of those events, and that the phrase 'activity', whenever used, should be explicable in those terms. But though others no doubt may have had better fortune, my own experience is that in our leading psychologies it is difficult or impossible to know what 'active' or 'energy' means. And since apparently these words stand for something important, I cannot but feel that we have a right to complain. If I may say what I think, the present

use of these phrases is little better than a scandal and a main obstacle in the path of English psychology. If one cannot employ them with a definite meaning, why use them at all? For a psychology that could not get on without them would most assuredly pass its own sentence. And (to apply what I have said to the present case) if the activity which is revealed tells me something about the origin and the nature of those events which we call attention, then, until its message is translated into clearness, we cannot regard it. But if it is meant to be a feeling which gives no message at all, and the question is whether this fact is essential to the process of attention, and again whether and how far we are able to decompose it, then it seems to me that the language applied to this feeling has been strangely misleading. For suppose that a psychical event which we cannot analyse is a necessary link in the process of attending, then from this it will follow that attention so far cannot be explained. But from this there is no passage to a statement about activity, which (whatever it may be) seems certainly complex and largely to be built upon inference from experience.

But on the assertor of such a link in the process of attention lies the burden of proof. I've even suppose that a feeling of activity is present, yet we have explained the fact of attention without it, and so we deny its efficacy. And in the second place we remark that a feeling of energy can hardly be asserted in *all* attention, and that it is difficult to say at what stage (if at any) it is always a concomitant. And where it is concomitant, perhaps there we go on to call the attention 'active' for no reason but the presence of this delusive feeling, which (so far as we have gone) seems not active at all but an accompaniment more or less superfluous. And if it is said, 'But you have not explained this feeling', I might reply that I cannot be called upon to do so. If I do not, does it follow that my account of attention is incorrect? Or, if so, would it follow that *therefore* attention reveals activity or energy or will or any other tidings of the kind? But if this could not be maintained, then perhaps, with a view to make good my case, I should do



better to deny the claim of the feeling and to rest on the denial. Still, to throw light on the subject so far as I can, I will offer some remarks on the nature of this much-misused phenomenon.

First let me say that by calling a feeling 'derivative' I do not mean that it comes *simply* from the union of other psychical elements. I do not mean that an emotion *is* simply those conditions which we say produce it. The conditions, the presence of certain psychical elements, must often, if not always, produce other states before the whole is present which we call the emotion. Of course *how*, for example, given certain ideas, certain internal sensations follow upon them is an open question; and it is an open question, when those sensations have followed, what part of this mass of sensations and ideas and feelings *is* the actual emotion. I have not to resolve these doubts, but am to point out conditions through which we get, and without which we should not get, the feeling of activity.

This last phrase recalls a shocking ambiguity. A 'feeling *of*' has at least three different senses. It means feeling simply felt, and that never as yet has been interpreted by and combined with ideas, or feeling recognized as that which is *of* something else, or feeling not now recognized but modified by the results of past recognition. In the first of these cases the 'of' does not belong to the feeling. It belongs solely to an outsider who adds ideas true or false, but in either case derived from other experience. And to predicate these ideas directly 'of' the feeling is a serious error. Now if we take activity at the stage where it is recognized and is felt as such, we can see at once its composite character. It contains the idea of myself changing something opposed, and it contains still more. If I suffered a change from which something else followed, that by itself would not be taken as activity. The change must come from me, that is, I must have an idea of it (if not also a desire), and this idea, or end, must lead to the change. Now I think no one can deny that to be conscious of all this is possible only through a liberal interpretation of much experience. But on the other hand what sense, when

these constituents are removed, is left to my consciousness of energy put forth? If there is a feeling which goes now together with this complex and has gone before it, that feeling is *of* energy in much the same manner in which relief from the pains of hunger and cold is a feeling *of* swaddling clothes and *of* milk, or a metaphysical proof of their absolute reality.

But what is the feeling which becomes by experience the feeling of activity? Or for the present let us ask what are its conditions. I think its origin lies in the feeling of expansion that follows upon the enlargement of the self. I have to assume the doctrine that of our psychical contents a certain group is closely united, and is connected in a very special manner with pleasure and pain, and that this group is the first appearance of our self. I have to assume again that this psychical mass, with its connexions, is perpetually growing larger and smaller as against other elements. And I must assume once more that the expansion gives *in general* a feeling of pleasure, while contraction brings pain, and that we may call these the two chief modes of self-feeling. I must assume all this here and pass over the difficulties which of course beset it. Now the expansion is *not* the consciousness of activity, nor is it a consciousness of the self or the body or a consciousness of anything at all. It merely is and is felt in a certain way. Not till after a considerable growth of the soul (which we cannot here deal with) does there come the perception of a self and a not-self with what is called consciousness. Then when we get to know from repeated experience that changes ensue upon modes of our self (as a body that is conscious, and later as consciousness along with a body), we acquire the notion of activity or will. We are active when the not-self, consisting in external or internal sensation or perception or idea, changes on the presence of an idea and (I will add) a desire of that change within the self. This expansion of our area beginning from within gives a certain feeling, and it is interpreted as a putting forth of a something from out the self into the not-self—the something being energy or force or will,

named in a variety of phrases all equally delusive, and in fact of course being nothing at all. Where the group of the self is contracted by the not-self and a pleasant idea of expansion is suggested, there is a feeling of pressure. When in addition the limit of resistance wavers, and the ideal expansion is realized partly, with a further advance of expansion in idea and perhaps an oscillation of actual retreat and actual advance, there is wavering and a consciousness of tension and effort.<sup>1</sup> In all this there is a happening—a happening of events; there is nothing beside facts coexistent and successive, with the result of other facts. And I think in this way we could give throughout psychology a definite meaning to action and passivity.

I cannot dwell on this outline, but must hasten to consider a point of interest. There is no doubt that in getting from experience (as we must) the idea of self-expansion, the muscular element is most important. But it would be wrong to say that our sense of tension and effort must always come from muscular feeling. In the resistance of an idea that will haunt or escape us, and in the tension of waiting for the issue of a crisis, the origin of the feeling is clearly not muscular. And if it is urged that at any rate the feeling has elements which must have arisen from muscular experience, that, if true, would not be relevant. It would not show that these elements originate the feeling, and it ignores the distinction between a total emotion and its producing conditions which we mentioned above. I have not said that from self-expansion, however strong the ideas and sensations concerned, and however intense the pleasure and pain, would come the entire emotion of activity, strain, effort, and success. Not only do the kinds of the elements involved make important differences, but there is a fresh result of internal sensations. This result—take, for instance, the sense we have of fatigue or elation—is exceedingly hard to decompose. It seems an obscure confusion or blending of organic sensations from a variety of sources, and I confess that at present I should not feel able to discuss it. I have mentioned it to point out that it does not

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Waitz, 301 ff.; Nahlowsky, *Gefühlleben*, 86 ff.

concern us, for it is clearly no more than concomitant with, or sequent on, what we call activity. If we have hitherto found no revelation of energy, we need hardly look for its original message in this residual oracle of organic sensation.

I have now said all that within present limits I can say on the psychical origin of our sense of activity, and of the meaning we might give to the term in psychology if so disposed, and I must hasten to bring these remarks to an end. But there is one point as to which I may fear misconstruction. It might possibly be said that physiology proves attention to be active, and that this settles the matter. Now of course I am not competent to speak physiologically. I have the sincerest respect for physiologists. I believe them to be men as a class superior in ability to psychologists and surpassing them in devotion, and engaged on a subject to whose difficulties (it seems to me) those offered by psychology are in comparison trifling. But such a question as the existence of a psychical activity is a matter which falls outside physiology. We might get from that science instruction valuable and, in some particulars, even necessary; but suppose that we knew (as I presume we do *not* yet know) the physical side of the psychical process, is it certain that about the main question we should not be precisely where we are now? For in the first place the existence of this or that feeling could hardly be deduced from physiological premises if actual observation were unable to find it. And in the second place between a process in the brain and a consciousness of energy there is really a gulf which is not to be filled up. You may know from experience that they are found together, but, given the first, you could never have got to the second, and they remain in the end quite heterogeneous. And so I venture to think that, whether the incoming current stimulates the centre, or the centre discharges on the motor nerves, or the central motor organ puts forth energy also upon the sensory centre, or whatever else may happen, is as regards the main question entirely irrelevant, and, so far as I can judge, seems likely to remain so. And if any one replies, Here is physiological activity with a psychical

feeling, and *therefore* of course the latter must be a feeling of activity, I will not gainsay it. I will merely ask him not to vary the meaning of his phrase without giving us notice, and somewhere to set down as clearly as he can what he means by a physiological activity. He should then give us a list of the psychical states where this condition is present, either according to the doctrine of physiologists in general, or of perhaps two or three, or of perhaps himself only. And in this case we may avoid that disastrous muddle of the body and the mind, which may appear 'scientific' but can advance no science.

We have now seen that from physiology no evidence can be brought to settle our main problem, and we have already attempted to exhibit the origin of our sense of expended energy. If that account is correct, then a specific activity of attention is no fact observed in the mind, but is a construction more or less fictitious and misleading. And if our account is not correct, that result still remains. We shall have shown that in every stage of attention we require no intervening event, and that a sense of energy (supposing it to exist) would be therefore not essential and probably not effective, but a more or less constant concomitant or result. And, if so, we have accomplished the task we undertook. There are two features however in the process of attention which deserve a passing notice.

Is attention negative, and is it so directly or always indirectly? I think the latter view the right one. When we are engrossed by one thing we lose sight of the others (why this must be so I shall not inquire), but the attention seems positive. And when an idea is painful and perhaps suggests also a prospect of pain, and when because of this character it is weakened or banished (I shall not ask through what means), there is in no case a negative activity of banishment. The attention which banishes is the dominance of an interest exclusive of the first and with a possible dominance of the idea of their conflict. In the latter case the positive interest will be strengthened by a powerful contrast, and attention to the pain will increase its strength and may hasten its disappearance. Further,

when we attend to the absence of a certain idea in the sense of attending to the prevention of its presence, the influence is positive. We have the idea of a certain element being suggested and being found in fact to be incongruous with reality, and we have also (let us say) the desire that this should be so. Hence, when the idea arises, we have (apart from the weakening action of pain) a strong suggestion of its expulsion from the field. And the first chance mental element that suits with this suggestion attracts our notice and is used as the positive side of expulsion. But if the idea of what ought to be expelled is too dominant, the process renews itself and defeats its own purpose. There can be no attention which is merely negative.

Finally we may ask how attention is fixed. We resolve to attend, and we persist in that attitude though the object is not in itself engaging. This is easily explained. In resolving to attend we had, as we saw, an idea of ourselves, and we have in the sequel a constant perception or feeling of ourselves (based no doubt upon our internal sensations) as being here and now and in this or that disposition or attitude. It is this more or less particular perception of self which recalls the resolve, and, in the absence of attention, produces a conflict between the idea and the fact of ourselves. In the same way any obvious external object or internal condition, once connected with the idea of myself engrossed in a certain way by such or such an object, will more or less continually suggest that idea with the usual result. The principle in these cases is one and the same, and the detail of its various applications would hardly serve to make it much clearer.

## XI

### ON A FEATURE OF ACTIVE ATTENTION

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I SHOULD like, in consequence of Mr. Ward's article (*M.* o.s. xii. 45-67), to be allowed a few words on an essential point. To Mr. Ward's objections in general I cannot reply, because the only answer I could make would be to confess that I have failed entirely and throughout to convey to him my meaning. I am sorry for this, because otherwise I should have valued his criticism. All I wish to do here is to attempt to clear up one point as to active attention—namely, the manner in which it may intensify sensations. The account which I adopted (*M.* o.s. xi = *E.* x) was that the result is caused by a transfer of strength from an idea through blending.

If we take for example a composite smell, one of its elements may engross me directly by its strength. Again, resolving to observe and bringing the idea of one element, I may find the answering component in sensation strengthened. Or again, that component may excite ideas, its own forming the centre, and upon this we may find the sensation grow stronger. In all these cases I think the idea blends itself with the sensation, so adding strength thereto. No doubt much happens besides, but I think thus much to be essential, and I tried (as I believed) to say so (*E.* x. 186-9).

Nor need any one who holds that the working idea interests through pleasure be, I think, at a loss. If he should be so misled as to doubt that there are ideas of pleasure, he need not therefore cease to believe that ideas may be pleasant. Nor need he doubt that an idea, like every other psychical event, has a force which is not the same as its pleasantness. He will say, I think, that the influence of this pleasure on the sensation is another and a further question, but that here the essential point to his mind is a transfer of strength as distinct from pleasantness.

But, for myself, I do *not* hold that interest must consist in pleasure, and I really did my best, though it would seem not successfully, to say so (*ibid.* 186-7). I ought, indeed, to have mentioned, when, for argument's sake, I treated the interest of ideas as their pleasantness, that I did not intend that to hold good, for argument's sake, of sensations also. This, in fact, did not occur to me, and so I omitted to issue any warning to the reader.

I will only add my regret that my paper should have appeared to be a criticism of Mr. Ward individually. Nothing in it referred to him, and when the manuscript left my hands I do not think that I had read one word of his writing. I have had that pleasure since, and can assure Mr. Ward that, though I think the view of attention which he has adopted is quite inadmissible, this is far from blinding me to the solid value of his work in general.



## XII

### ASSOCIATION AND THOUGHT

[First published in MIND, O.S. xii, No. 47, 354-81. July, 1887.]

THE intention of this paper is to show in outline how Thought comes to exist. Its method, I trust, is strictly psychological. It has to do solely with psychical occurrences and their laws. The facts immediately experienced within a single organism or soul,<sup>1</sup> and those facts regarded merely as events which happen, make the object of psychology.<sup>2</sup> The word 'Association' has been used to express my

<sup>1</sup> Not *subject*, because at first there is no proper subject, nor Ego, for the further reason that in abnormal states we may have more than one Ego or none at all. If we do not define by the organism, as for some reasons is undesirable (I do not discuss this), we must use the word 'soul' or 'mind'. In psychology I should define the soul as 'a totality of immediate experience, possessed of a certain temporal continuity of existence, and again of a certain identity in character'. 'Totality' is used to exclude partial states. 'Experience' is not definable: it can only be indicated. 'Immediate' negatives and excludes phenomena so far as their content is used beyond their existence: truth, e.g., as *truth* is not merely psychical. The amount of continuity and ideal identity required to make a single soul is matter of opinion, and mainly, I should say, of arbitrary opinion. The above definition is of course open to metaphysical objections, as are the conceptions which *must* be used in all empirical science. The objections are therefore irrelevant. It would be as idle to urge that the soul (as above) is not a real thing as to say the organism is not one real thing because its matter has changed. At any given time the soul *is* its phenomenal contents *plus* that past which is taken to belong to it.

<sup>2</sup> On the object of psychology see an article by the Editor, M. O.S. viii. 1-21. Mr. Ward, M. O.S. xii. 45-67, in objecting to the above position, has invited me to define a psychical fact or event. A metaphysical definition I of course decline to give in an empirical science (L. 339-42 = 315-18). A definition in psychology is for me a working definition. It is not expected to have more truth than is required for practice in its science; and if when pressed beyond it contradict itself, that is quite immaterial. With this understanding I will state what I mean by a psychical event, first giving an incomplete definition and then correcting it. A psychical fact must (1) be immediately experienced (see above). (2) It must have duration: what does not exist through a succession of moments is not a fact. (3) It must have quality: there must be sense in asking 'of what sort', quality being here

agreement with the English school at its best. With it I am convinced that thought proper is a product, and that, taken to include the aspect of pleasure and pain, though usually it is convenient to separate quality from 'tone'. (4) A fact has intensity. (5) In reply to the possible objection that duration *has* not duration, &c., we must say, Any one of the above aspects *is* a fact, so far as it is a mere aspect of that which has all the rest. So far, I hope, the definition is not very obscure. But, further, (6) it is necessary to include relations, even where no one would say that they are immediately experienced. Is the reappearance of some traits of childhood in old age not a psychical fact? But are these relations of succession and identity immediately experienced either by the soul or by the observing psychologist? We see here the impotence of empirical science to justify its principles theoretically. We have to amend our definition of fact; and yet, if amended, it threatens to let in metaphysics. But we meet this practically by the proviso that the above relations are not facts, save and except so far as they exist between facts as previously defined. That, I hope, answers the purpose; and the definition will run: 'A psychical fact is anything which is immediately experienced and has duration, quality, intensity; or is any one of these aspects, as a mere distinguishable aspect—so far, that is, as one aspect is taken as belonging to something which possesses the other aspects also; or, again, is any relation existing between any facts as previously defined.' If we leave individual states and go on to the general, and ask if laws are facts—that is, to some extent, I presume, a matter of taste. I should say that, to speak properly, they are not so, though it may be convenient to call them so. The laws, of course, are confined to the region of facts.

It must be, of course, understood that our science does not disregard *other* aspects of psychical states, e.g. logical or ethical. But it looks at them merely with a view to deal with them as appearing in and as influencing the course of psychical events. And a reply to the objection that 'an unanalysable element in every psychical event' is not itself an event (l.c. 66) seems hardly wanted when we know what we mean by an event. Obviously the whole life of a man is an event, is a piece of new duration, though no event to the man. And, apart from that, changes in the intensity of the element would, of course, be events; as would be also the changes in the relation of that element to others. Mr. Ward, I presume, has argued from some meaning which he attaches to fact and I do not. But my object is merely to find a plain way of barring metaphysics out of psychology, and I am far from asserting that another way cannot be found, though an 'individualistic standpoint' is, I am sure, no solution. Unless this end is reached somehow, the amount of metaphysics to be introduced is limited merely by the inclination or the knowledge of the psychologist. I say advisedly that I do not know a single metaphysical question which can be ruled out of psychology on principle, if any single one is let in; and I would call upon every English psychologist to face this problem without reserve, and to come either to an understanding or at least to a clear issue.

starting from what is presented, and keeping wholly to that field and to the laws of its movements, our science can trace Thought's probable generation. And if at any point we fail, then that point must be marked as 'at present unknown'. Nothing can warrant our importation of a faculty or faculties, or a subject and its functions, or an activity, or an energy, if we mean by these more than some law of phenomena, some way of happening among psychical events. Our sole remedy is to reconsider our data and their laws, and to refuse to bring shame upon our honest nakedness by scraps of physiology and rags of metaphysics. It is to mark my entire adhesion to this principle that I have used 'Association', but I dissent from very much that has been joined to the word. The English school, in my opinion, has failed to show the origin of the higher phenomena, because in its starting-point it has been seriously mistaken. Both the elements and the laws, into which (like all science) it has analysed the given, have been formulated in such a way that successful advance from them seems not possible. And the main cause is to be found in that dogmatic Atomism, which (whatever it might be as a statement of first principles) had no right to interfere with an empirical science. But I will not repeat a criticism which elsewhere I felt bound to urge to the extreme, and perhaps urged too harshly. I would rather feel that, in helping (so far as I can help) to modify the starting-point and to make progress easier, I am endeavouring at least to work in the spirit of the best English tradition.

For more reasons than one I cannot pretend to offer here the satisfactory treatment of so large a subject. I shall attempt in the first place to mark out the ground by pointing to the main characteristic of Thought; I shall then try to show rapidly how this feature has arisen, from what foundation, and by what laws; and in the third place shall deal with some difficulties. I shall have everywhere to be so brief as to require the utmost indulgence of the reader, and will at once begin with the first of my tasks.

What is the chief characteristic of Thought? I shall make on this point a very short statement, and must be

allowed to refer to my *Principles of Logic*. The main feature is objectivity, and this means a control proceeding from the object. That which suffers control is the entire psychical process, so far as it does not subserve the development of the object. Sensations, emotions, fancies, volitions, are suppressed or modified to suit this end. I may, of course, will to think, and to think this or that, but the way in which this or that shapes itself in thought is independent of my liking. To interfere would be to vitiate or wholly destroy. But now what is the object? That it is not mere sense-experience should be a commonplace. Nor is it simply whatever is excluded from the self, because the self is also an object of thought. And to say it is that of which we are conscious would throw no light, if we may be conscious where we do not (strictly) think. The object is any portion of the psychical process, so far as it bears and subserves a certain character. It must in the first place have a meaning, an ideal content which is distinct from its existence as a psychical occurrence. And further, this content must preserve its identity. It must from beginning to end be a self-same whole which keeps together without any foreign assistance. We must be able to say that from the beginning it has been and still is merely itself, and is therefore in the end because of its beginning. This claim may be invalid, but it is involved in our beliefs as to what thought must be if it keeps its character. The standard is, in short, to include all the facts and to get them consistent, but to do this merely in an ideal form. The end in other words is individuality, which in the attempt to be perfect must try to be complete, because its autocracy is not possible if its empire is limited. I believe that what follows will make this more clear, and I have stated it that we may realize the task before us. This goal has to be reached by a natural development from the lowest beginnings of psychical life.

I have said that Association in its usual sense has failed to account for this development, and has failed at the end because wrong at the beginning. We have now to modify its principles and make them more effective; but I will first

repeat how entirely I accept their main tendency. Psychology is concerned with nothing beyond presentation and its laws, with nothing but the process of given events and the modes of their happening. It is from these elements that we must explain the generation of all else, for at all events no *other* explanation is admitted within our science. I shall state lower down what I mean by presentation, and will now point out the changes to be made in our ordinary doctrine. First, the Atomism must go wholly. We must get rid of the idea that our mind is a train of perishing existences, that so long as they exist have separable being and, so to speak, are coupled up by another sort of things which we call relations. If we turn to what is given this is not what we find, but rather a continuous mass of presentation in which the separation of a single element from all context is never observed, and where, if I may use the expression, no one ever saw a carriage, and still less a coupling, divided from its train. You may urge that your doctrine is the absolute truth in the light of metaphysics. That may be so, but in psychology, because it will not work, it must not be let in. And to the Associationist, as to the Herbartian, we must reply that in our science their metaphysics are irrelevant, and that in other respects we can accept wholly the principles of neither, because (as they are used) they do not seem to work successfully, and because without great inconsistencies they would not work at all.

Hence the Atomism must go wholly, and the 'associative links' must be connexions of content, not conjunctions of existences; in other words, Association marries only universals.<sup>1</sup> I of course do not mean that bare universals are psychical facts. These connexions in strictness are not facts at all, although at times it may be convenient to call them so. An actual fact works so or so because of such or such a connexion when its content has one of the features connected; and it is then a case or instance of the law. But the association by itself is the law by itself, and no actual event that can ever occur. Lower down I shall have to say

<sup>1</sup> I must refer the reader here to my *Principles of Logic*. I do not think I should be justified in occupying the pages of *Mind* with a reprint of my work.

more on what are called 'dispositions', and must now advance rapidly. Atomism being rejected, the Law of Similarity goes with it. This of course expresses truth, but a truth which is derivative and a consequence from others. Its importance rests on the objection to sameness, but psychology (like other sciences) has a right to call phenomena identical so far as they have the same content. And if the sameness is a fiction, none the less it means to use it. We are therefore left with Contiguity, and it is necessary to re-state this so as to make it depend always on identity of content, not of existence. 'Every mental element when present tends to reinstate those elements with which it has been presented.' The meaning of 'tends' is that it does so unless prevented at the time, or unless something in the meantime has happened to prevent it, and that according to circumstances a greater or less force is required for prevention. The 'element' means any distinguishable aspect of the 'what' as against the mere 'that'. And we must remember that these connexions, being independent of the 'this' of mere presentation, hold good everywhere, at all times, and with every context. This has most vital consequences. Psychology should, of course, not assert that its elements in truth and really do work in abstraction and apart from a presented context, and, if it is wise, it will remember that its separation of one part of the soul from the rest, or even again from the universe at large, is made wholly on sufferance. But to any one who brands this assumption as falsehood we must reply, 'If a fiction, it deals with the facts. Let psychology mind its own business.' Whether this altered law of Contiguity should keep its name or have another, such as Redintegration, depends on those who have earned the right to dispose of it. I shall use the term if they permit me.

We have so far reduced the laws of Association to a single principle, and so far I have been able to refer the reader to my *Principles of Logic*.<sup>1</sup> I must now proceed

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bain in *M. o.s.* xii. 161-82 has criticized some points in the account I there gave. I am sorry that the amount of space here at my disposal compels me to say merely that my opinions have not been changed

more slowly. Beside this improved law of Contiguity or Redintegration, there is a law of Blending or Coalescence or Fusion. Where different elements (or relations of elements) have any feature the same they may unite wholly or partially. The more wholly they unite the more their differences are destroyed, with a transfer of strength to the result. And where they unite partially, they may or may not bring before us a new relation. There is no doubt that these laws of Contiguity and Blending work so closely together, that in many cases we hardly know which we have to lay stress on; but I do not think that one can be reduced to the other. Unless we extend blending beyond *events* (to this point I shall return), it will not cause reproduction, since in that only one of the elements can be present, and what is absent cannot blend. And, on the other hand, though with blending we have usually reproduction, yet we also have effects which that will not explain. I must pause to illustrate this latter point. Take the cases first where strengthening is produced, where, e.g., an idea makes intense a sensation. You may say that the sensation has its content enlarged by ideal recovery, and that doubtless is usual; but to say that it is necessary and that it explains the phenomenon seems quite untenable. In instances such as those where attention strengthens sensations in the extremities or elsewhere, I cannot *always* find an enlargement of content, and, if there is ideal recovery, I am sometimes at a loss to say *what* is reinstated. Take the cases again where distinctions are produced in a perception or idea.<sup>1</sup> I see a blur in the sky, and because I know it is a constellation, I then perceive that it is so. Again, I am thinking of an Englishman and then see a host of ants, which makes me think of an army of Englishmen. In the first case we may be told that it is all reproduction, and that the interstices are recovered by ideal contiguity. But, I answer, if the idea already was there when I did *not* perceive, will its further reinstatement effect the perception? Or again, if the idea was not present, and there really has

<sup>1</sup> I have got considerable assistance here from Fortlage, *System der Psychologie*, 1855. Cp. Volkmann, *Lehrbuch*, § 93.

been an ideal reproduction (or, again, an external suggestion), does that by itself explain sufficiently my altered perception? We must remember that, having two objects apparently the same, after an idea has been suggested we may go on to perceive the suggestion as a fact in one case and *not* in the other. This must point to a strengthening as distinct from a recovery. And when I thought of an army, if the idea of an Englishman was already there, it could hardly be recovered; and where through association it was brought in by the ants, yet how was it altered and turned into an army? Was it not by a transfer through blending following on the reinstatement? We must say then that fusion, the importance of which will appear in the sequel, is not a case of reproduction.

Can we go on to find a principle which underlies the two laws we have just set forth?<sup>1</sup> I think we can, though we must not say that these laws can be deduced directly from it. Every mental element (to use a metaphor) strives to make itself a whole or to lose itself in one, and it will not have its company assigned to it by mere conjunction in presentation. Each struggles to develop itself by the weapon of identity, which gives strength by coalescence and enlargement by recall. And this effort to succeed by association with like characters may bring loss of life to the single member. To speak more strictly, each element tends (that is, moves unless prevented) by means of fusion and redintegration to give itself a context through identity of content, and in the result which is so made the element may not survive in a distinguishable form. It is also a fact that the collision, which results in great part from this movement, causes pain and unrest; and I think we may see that the unrest cannot cease as long as the elements given are unable to form a whole possessed throughout of such a content that it suggests nothing out of harmony with anything else. The reader may dismiss this statement as mere 'transcendentalism'; but until my error is shown me I shall believe that it is strict empirical psychology, a mere

<sup>1</sup> The process which Wundt calls 'Assimilation' I take to be subordinate where it is not fictitious.



general statement of the way in which events do happen. We may call it, if we please, the law of Individuation, and we should find that thought and will are each one case of it, made distinct by the different fields in which particularization is worked out. But we must remember that our law perhaps to some extent uses a scientific fiction. It is convenient to speak of the movement of each element, but we must not assert (or deny) that in reality the element can do or be anything—unless, indeed, we are prepared to make psychology a battle-field for metaphysicians.

We have so far seen that Association can be reduced to the struggle of each element towards an independent totality by means of sameness in content, and that this principle works by coalescence where the conditions are given, and, again, by redintegration made through the establishment of connexions superior to time. And if we like to call the movement an *ideal* process, this may distinguish it from what is by comparison *mechanical*, the basis upon which alone it exists and to which it has to suit itself. I must now point out this machinery, though, I fear, without completeness. There is first the incoming of fresh sensations, external and internal, partly new and in part the same. There is the disappearance of old ones, caused I will not here ask how. There is the limit to the amount of what can come to us at once, a limit varying but effective. We see here the conditions of another kind of struggle, a struggle for existence among actual facts, alongside of the former struggle through identity, but crossing it at times and blending with it inextricably. In this more mechanical conflict what favours individuals? We must mention first habit, aptitudes produced by repetition, or got by heredity, or again in some way not known. Elements suited to these are strengthened, and in some cases also enlarged, and so tend to dominate. Where these aptitudes depend on ideal connexions they are instances of association, but where or so far as there is no psychical revival this is not the case. I think that psychology must accept this fact as an ultimate, unless it will venture on Herbart's startling assumptions or deviate into physiology. Passing by this, we come next

to mere natural strength of presentation. If we wish to get this *bare*, we must look for it in 'disparate' sensations, those which possess no *special* common character.<sup>1</sup> Strength will here amount simply to prevalence or domination. That which occupies more mental space than or, again, totally or partially excludes something else is said to have more force. And it has *bare* force when it prevails, not by virtue of aught else (such as habit or pleasure), but in its own right and simply.<sup>2</sup> Turning now from these conditions to one not mechanical, though hardly ideal, we reach the influence of pleasure and pain. That these work seems certain (though of course not demonstrable), but the way in which they work is still matter of controversy and I shall pass it by, and for the same reason shall do no more than mention Contrast.

But there is one point which, before we go on, I must notice—the nature of 'traces' or 'residues' or 'dispositions'. Associations are set up, and we say that these exist, but how can that be? Do the elements continue as psychical facts, and if not, do their relations remain somehow apart from them? Or what is the real nature of a general tendency? This is a problem which, in my judgement, falls outside psychology. To ask what a law is belongs to metaphysics, and such a question elsewhere can bring nothing but mischief. There are, so far as I know, four courses we may take, three bad and one good. We may follow the line laid down by Herbart, and force out an explanation by

<sup>1</sup> All sensations, in my judgement, do possess some common character. This will hold good whether we do or do not accept the view that the special sense *continua* have been differentiated from one primitive *continuum*. See Horwicz, *Psych. Analysen*.

<sup>2</sup> When we get sensations possessed of a special community we can say of the stronger, It is the less *plus* some more. On the vexed question of 'units' I can say nothing here. The feature of domination in consciousness, or superiority general or special, becomes of course an idea, and we can so get the idea without the reality of strength. The reader will see that I dissent partly from Lotze's view as to strength (*Mikrokosmos*, i. 229, *Metaph.*, § 262). The whole question is very difficult, and would require a long discussion. The reader should consult Mr. Ward's remarks (*Encyc. Brit.* xx. 58), which, however, good as they are, still leave much to be desired.

audacious assumptions and complicated fictions. And then we know where we are; as we may think we do, again, when we deny that a disposition is really psychical, and leave psychology for a region which I assuredly would not venture to call physiology. We clearly do not know where we are when we take a very common third course, and use phrases which may mean anything, to hide the fact that there is nothing distinct that we mean. But there is only one scientific course, to say plainly that what a disposition really may be we neither know nor care. We have in science to do solely with events and their laws, events not being laws, and laws not being events, and we mean by a disposition that, because something has happened, therefore something will happen, *suppose that* something else happens and nothing interferes. And for this reason we cannot talk (except by a licence) of the blending of one disposition with others or with presentations. If no element is there in existing fact, blending has no proper meaning.

We have now glanced at the field in which our improved Association has to develop the various faculties of the mind, and we have seen the motive powers used by the various combatants, and the heterogeneous conditions of victory. We have seen the cause of that disorder which at every moment can be found in the most regulated minds. We have now shortly to describe the beginnings of soul-life, and to exhibit roughly the means by which Thought in the proper sense comes to exist.

To give a picture of the earliest psychical condition, whether in man or the lower animals, is not my intention. Nor is this necessary for my purpose, which is to show merely in outline those steps which connect the origin and the end. The nature of the earliest stage of soul-life must be largely conjectural. It is likely that in some points our knowledge will be much increased; but we shall always be left with certain given limits, within which we must construct a sketch that is probable but which we cannot quite verify. What we can be sure of is that any theory which begins with a derivative function, such as choice or memory, cannot possibly be true. The short account I am

to give avoids, I hope, such sheer barbarisms. It is, I trust, at least psychologically possible.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning there is nothing beyond what is presented, what is and is felt, or rather is felt simply. There is no memory or imagination or hope or fear or thought or will, and no perception of difference or likeness. There are, in short, no relations and no feelings, only feeling. It is all one blur with differences, that work and that are felt, but are not discriminated. Hence to the question, Is this life discrete or continuous?, our answer is ready. It cannot (for the soul) be discrete, because that implies distinction. There is not only no good evidence in favour of discreteness, but there is this argument against it. Suppose that for an outside observer sensations, as a series or as a collection of series, happened in the mind, yet, for that mind at the outset, the separation and succession would not as such exist. If the whole were not unbroken, it would at least so be given to a feeble mind, because the machinery required for the perception of succession, and of relations in general between sensations, is not yet at work and could not be at work. And, if I am told that this perception is entirely simple and wants no machinery, I am afraid I must pass on, until my objector shows at least that he is not barbarous but has some acquaintance with the question at issue. There are, then, no several sensations for the early mind, and, whatever efficacy we may assign to relation and to change (a point which I omit), there is no change and no relation which comes as such to that mind. For itself it is not discrete, and hence also it is not explicitly continuous.

If now, turning from this point, we ask *what* is presented, that inquiry may have a good many senses. Do special sensations exist, and, if so, in what sense and how many? How do quantity and quality stand one to the other, and can we say that either, as such and specifically, makes itself felt? I intend to pass by these questions, and glance rather at the doubt as to pleasure and pain. Do

<sup>1</sup> I must be allowed to refer once more to my *Principles of Logic*. Mr. Ward's excellent article (cited above) will be found in many points to support the view I have adopted.

these exist from the first, or must we say they come later? I do not know any way of deciding this problem. In the first place, I am not sure if sensations are *now* ever entirely indifferent—if, that is, they are ever more than relatively neutral; and, if so, whether they are neutral as being wholly bare, or as having in them a resultant both of pleasure and pain. Again, if we suppose that some sensations are to us now indifferent, either in normal or again in pathological conditions, can we go from that to the conclusion that it ever was so when the mind was a simpler whole? Is there, in short, any good argument for the absence (partial or total) of pleasure and pain (or one of them) from the earliest soul-life? If I had that knowledge about pleasure and pain which some psychologists possess, I might perhaps settle these questions. But, as it is, I must conclude that it is safer *not* to suppose that at first pleasure and pain may be absent from sensation, or for the mind are attached to parts of the whole; and so I shall assume their presence. How then will these two sides stand to one another? In the first place, a pleasure or a pain is not anything by itself. It is always something painful or pleasant, and that something is sensation (or sensations).<sup>1</sup> And in reply to the possible objection that pleasure and pain are not given at all, I must point to the facts. If we take 'given' or 'presented', not as implying a donation or even a relation to an Ego, but rather for that which is simply, and comes as it is, then in this sense pain and pleasure must be called presentations.

<sup>1</sup> This is the place to take up the question of reproduction by pleasure and pain. Are they exceptions to the law that *all* elements move towards reintegration? In the first place, though I cannot show that they do act merely as pleasure or pain (because I do not know how to make the abstraction required), yet, on the other hand, I do not see how to deny that a mere difference in bare pleasure (supposing that to happen) might make the essence of revival as against no revival. It seems probable that pleasure in general may as such have associations, and still more probable that pleasures in their union with qualities may have special associations, and may recall where the qualities alone would not recall. And the evidence seems in favour of pleasure and pain being recalled by qualities sometimes and not being *always* recreated. That being so, I feel bound to include them under the law.

But the objection leads on to a further discussion. Is there anything at the start beyond mere presentation, that is feeling with the distinctions of quality, quantity, and 'tone', which *we* abstract from one another, but which at first come within one blurred whole which merely *is*? I feel convinced that there is nothing. I do not think, in the first place, that there is at the start any aspect of *self-feeling* (L. 503 = 456). True, the whole that is given, however poor that may be, does expand and contract, and feels pleasure and pain; but to *be* a felt expansion, and to feel it as such, are not the same thing. Until a core has grown together, against which the alteration can come as an 'other', I cannot see how the aspect of self is possible. And I find no reason to suppose that at the beginning this internal group does, even in a rudimentary shape, exist. If the early soul is rich enough to afford this variety, yet the distinction is not a thing which requires no making, or can make itself at once and without machinery. Hence there is at first no self-feeling, even though we mean by that merely one aspect of the whole; and still less is there anything like a subject and object. I observe much confusion on this head. The distinction, we may hear, is not to be transcended. Now, if this is meant metaphysically, it is utterly irrelevant. Whether really and in the end all the contents of the universe, my self included, are or are not relative to some subject, is a question on which psychology has nothing, and cannot have anything, to say; while to stop short of this question is to make no advance at all. But, remaining within psychology, I remark, in the first place, that in verifiable experience we occasionally have states where this relation of subject and object wholly ceases to exist. Still, this is not the main point. For where experience does give us a reference to self, that self is not naked form. It has always a content, a concrete filling that varies but never is absent. Now, I would urge, if this reference exists at the start, what is the content of the subject? Is it likely that experience, at its poor and blurred beginning, does divide itself into two parts with a relation between them; and, if so, what fills each part, and what

machinery can at once effect this distinction? Until these questions are fairly met, the introduction of a subject into the early mind is not merely perhaps false, but is not scientific. The mere form of a subject could do nothing, and indeed for psychology is nothing; while to give the Ego a concrete, super-sensible character would hardly serve better. For if this character comes into given experience, then it becomes mere presentation that is mixed with the rest; and if it somehow stays outside and touches only, so to speak, with the end of a relation the presented datum, then it falls outside empirical psychology. And with respect to Attention, or Apperception, or Activity, I have said something before (*E. x*) which I will not repeat. I should be loath to criticize the doctrine as, for instance, it has appeared in the writings of Wundt; and, maintained as it is by Mr. Sully and, to a still wider extent, by Mr. Ward, it has become to me no clearer. Not only to my mind does it fail in part to be intelligible, but I find no adequate information as to the basis on which I am to suppose that it rests. The main point, I think, is this: if attention is not an event or a law of events, has it a right to exist in empirical science? Is it not simply a revival of the doctrine of faculties? And I am afraid to go on until I have pointed out the vice of admitting faculties. It is not merely their number which makes them objectionable, and it is a very serious mistake so to look at the matter. The principle is the same with one as with a hundred. In its worst form the faculty is a something outside that interferes by a miracle with the course of phenomena. I need not say that in this sense it is embraced by neither Mr. Sully nor Mr. Ward, for with both of them Attention has a law of its working. In its more harmless form the faculty acts by a law, but the objection to it is that in this case it is idle. If it is merely an expression for a way in which things do occur, or if it is used further to mark a condition of their happening which is not yet known—then at its best it is a bad way of stating a law. And it seldom stays at its best. It becomes a phrase offered in explanation of phenomena beyond that field from which it has been drawn, which

phenomena the mere law would at once be seen *not* to explain. I feel no doubt that Wundt has used his Apperception in this way, and little less that Mr. Ward has partly followed the same line, and that Mr. Sully is at least somewhere on the brink of doing so (cp. *M. o.s.* x. 490). And I have thought it right to speak plainly because, if I am wrong, that may lead to the explanation of a doctrine which assuredly needs one, and which, from the character of its advocates, cannot be ignored.<sup>1</sup>

We have so far concluded that in the beginning there is neither a subject nor an object, nor an activity, nor a faculty of any kind whatever. There is nothing beyond presentation which has two sides—sensation and pleasure and pain. And for the mind there is no discretion, or even discrimination. All is feeling in the sense, not of pleasure and pain, but of a whole given without relations, and given *therefore*

<sup>1</sup> The appearance of Mr. Ward's article (*M. o.s.* xii) since this was written has not led me to modify it; but I will add a few words. Mr. Ward appears to me hardly sufficiently alive to the necessity of defining a term like 'activity'. If activity were wholly simple, then, of course, it could not be defined, but only pointed out. The question is, however, first, whether such a simple element does exist, and next, whether, if so, it answers to what we call activity. But Mr. Ward, I gather (l.c. 66), considers that activity contains a relation. If so, I would invite him to say more explicitly whether the terms of the relation are psychical facts, in the sense of being immediately experienced and having quality, duration, and intensity; or, if not that, what else they are. If Mr. Ward will do this, he will, I think, be convinced that the question is about more than words. I may be allowed to add that the question is hardly so much about the reality of activity as about its nature; and that my contention is hardly (as suggested on p. 66) that, *because* our perception of activity is composite now, *therefore* in attention there cannot be an unanalysable element. Activity has, it seems to me, a complex meaning now, and I have tried to show the psychical development of this complexity. Let that derivation be false and my contention is still this—Activity in its general use seems to have *some* meaning, and the man who uses it in psychology is bound first to say with what meaning he uses it. If he makes it an original constituent, he is none the less called upon to state its content; or if he holds that it admits of no more than bare pointing out, he is bound to state this explicitly. And, in the second place, he should say *why* he applies to this unanalysable element the term Activity rather than any other word. Meanwhile I feel called upon to repeat that in general the present way of treating this word is little better than a scandal.



as one with its own pain and pleasure. So far as it is possible to experience this after contrast has done its work, we do so most of all in organic sensation. From this basis, the machinery we went through above has to bring out subject and object, volition and thought.

I am entering ground that should now be more familiar, and shall hence advance very rapidly. The first point we have to notice is the formation of groups. The condition of this is that in the flux of sensations there should be regularities. Without some identity in the given our experience could not start, and no Ego or faculty could give us any help. These groups will consist mainly of the sensations conjoined by reflex action on the environment; but of course the salient connexions in those points of the environment, which have thus become emphasized by pleasure and pain, will enter into the groups. The way in which these unions come to be made may, I think, be assumed, and what I wish to urge is that at first they are neither subjective nor objective, nor have aspects distinguished. They are felt wholes in which the features all run together. The next point is the formation within these groups of features accidental and essential. I, of course, do not mean that they are known in that character. What I mean is that connexions have degrees of strength. When in the struggle of the elements repetition of the pleasant has sometimes led to pain, when the object and the movement (sensations A and B) have had one sequel CD and another EF, then what has been uniform coheres and defies competition, as the variable and occasional hardly can do. We have therefore some groups weak throughout, and within every group we get aspects connected strongly, while others are attached feebly. This point is of importance.

If we leave these formal considerations and look at the content of our groups, we find a striking difference. There is one of our groups, or one set of features in our various groups, which bears a special character. In the first place it is always (more or less of it) there; in the next place it is connected with pain and with pleasure as no other group

is. It is thus permanent, essential, and emphatic, against the variable and that which in comparison is accidental. First, what are its contents? The core of them is formed by that bundle of feelings which always is given, and which later we know as internal sensations. And (to anticipate) round this core, and identified with it, comes the whole body-group of sensations. This (still to anticipate) becomes the representative of the group we call self. And (anticipating further) let us ask what distinguishes the body from foreign objects. It is this mainly, that any alteration whatever of my body (whether regarded as antecedent to or as sequent on other events) is connected with pain and pleasure. It is not, I should say, strictly true that any change of my body-group must be felt as painful or pleasant. What is true is that the exceptions are too weak to affect the force of the association. And further, the changes of the body-group bring pain or pleasure *immediately*. It is not so with other groups. These are painful or pleasant when in certain relations, and in others their character is turned to the opposite, or fails altogether. Hence the pain or the pleasure becomes something not essential. Fire burns, warms, and does neither; an approaching body hurts or pleases, or again is indifferent. These other groups are not yet distinguished from the feeling they cause in me (this comes later); they are still one whole with my enjoyment or my suffering from them. But in comparison with the body-group their connexion is weakened. Because indirect and inconstant, it has failed to dominate. The body-group, upon the other hand, has grown together with that core of internal sensation, which has been indifferent either never, or too seldom to affect the strength of the connexion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In order to simplify, I have dwelt solely on pleasure and pain, because I think this the main point. If we may suppose them absent, I do not deny that a distinction of subject and object would be developed, but it would hardly be the same as that given now in experience. A complete account of the growth of our knowledge of our bodies would have, of course, to consider other points. The alteration of outer objects is not regularly a cause of further sensations (other than pleasure and pain), while the change of the body is so. This is illustrated further by double sensation, when two parts

Returning now from our digression we may have brought back some light. The foundation of the group which grows into the self is, and remains, those sensations which continue to be feeling in the sense of being one with pleasure and pain.<sup>1</sup> The real question is by what steps and in what degree and to what extent other groups are dissociated from this feeling-mass and qualify it by their contrast, and, on the other hand, what features are in various degrees connected with it. We have seen the way of dissociation. It lies in those repeated variations which by collision must loosen the feeling-aspects of some groups. On the other hand, we perceived how the direct and unceasing conjunction of the body-group with pleasure and pain made it inseparable from that aspect and one with its core of internal sensations. But at this point we must be cautious, or we shall fall into an error which is far too common. The feeling-mass is in the first place *not confined to the body-group*. It will contain more or less of *whatever in the environment has not been dissociated from itself*. The sensations from our surroundings, inclusive of other animates, are, certainly at first and probably afterwards, more or less inseparable from our self-group. This is a conclusion which follows from our principles theoretically, and in

of the body touch. Again (at a much later date), change of the body is found a condition of the perception of fresh phenomena. From another side the body is controlled directly and regularly by the feelings and thoughts; and outer objects, if at all, indirectly. I cannot pretend to deal here with the question fully and systematically. The problem of localization I omit wholly, and, as to the perception of the extended in general, all I can say is that I do not think it essential to the distinction of self from other objects, though now it colours all relations. As to its originality, I think that clearly in its origin it could not have borne the *relational* character it now has, and could have been neither discrete nor (properly) continuous. But all the attempts which I have seen made to derive extension from what is quite non-extended in my opinion break down. The problem is unfortunately mixed up with metaphysical preconceptions, both as to the discrete nature of the elements, and again as to the intensive, not to say simple, character of the soul. On the subject of discrimination and the perception of relations, I shall be able to say something when we deal with voluntary Analysis.

<sup>1</sup> This is the main key to pathological states of the Ego.

practice certain facts are inexplicable without it. Nor is there anything to urge against it but the metaphysical prejudice of individualism. And, in the second place, the outlines of this group are not fixed, and they never become fixed. If I ask what is myself, what are in general those habits, those ways of feeling, thinking, and acting, which make me what I am, the answer would vary with years. And it would vary in particular as from moment to moment the self contracts or expands with failure or satisfaction, and suffers from or possesses itself of the external; and at its limits I should not know what was part of me and what foreign. So that in putting forward the body-group as identified with, and representative of, the group one with feeling, we must remember that the body, neither at last *nor at first*, includes all the self; and that at its limits, and again later through nearly all its extent, the body becomes dissociable from self.

We have so far reached the stage where in the one mass of feeling (the unbroken whole of sensation and pleasure) groups are more or less connected, and where the greater part of these groups have been dissociated more or less from the feeling-nucleus, the core specially connected with pains and pleasures. We are still below the point at which consciousness,<sup>1</sup> with its subject and object, has appeared. This is fully reached first when a relation is perceived between the group identified with feeling and some features not identified. But this perception is led up to by a long course of hardening among cohesions and of collisions in the felt between the discrepancies. And, when consciousness is reached, it is not constantly maintained. It must come spasmodically and at intervals, with lapses between them, before it grows into a normal attitude of mind. The perception of the relation as such I will deal with lower

<sup>1</sup> I think, on the whole, that this is the best sense to give the word. But we cannot get rid of another, in which 'to be conscious' means 'to notice' and 'the unconscious' is that of which we are not aware. We may obviously be 'unconscious' of sensations which, for all that, make part of the object-group. Again, we must remember that in those states where the subject and object disappear, almost if not altogether, features of the object may sink back wholly into the stage of mere feeling.

down, when I touch upon discrimination in general. But what calls it forth is the practical collision between the feeling and a non-feeling group. After experienced satisfaction the object is approached with an expansion and excitement caused by ideal suggestion. If it resists and causes pain, there is a violent collision between the sensations, due (directly and through movement) to redintegration, and the discrepant outer group. And when both persist, the alternate expansion and driving in of first one group and then the other, with the strong pleasures and pains which mark the struggle, tears in half,<sup>1</sup> so to speak, the mere unity of feeling which formed the battle-ground. What we have called the feeling-core has had to identify itself at once with its own contraction and expansion in regard to the outer group, and the task is impossible. Before experience and association had brought up and fixed expansion on the presence of the object, the task did not exist, because the self was driven in and there was an end of it. Now it *must* go at once two ways which are divergent, and from this effort supervenes, not the cessation of the struggle, but the first perception of it. I do not mean that consciousness could have been predicted as a result apart from specific experience. I mean that, feeling sure it has emerged, we can to some extent see how that emergence must have happened. We can feel the problem that pressed hard upon the struggling mind and understand how the result has partly solved it.<sup>2</sup>

I will, in passing, glance here at the origin of our ideas of activity and resistance; and as the latter at all events

<sup>1</sup> It does not, of course, really tear it, or we should get two selves indifferent to each other.

<sup>2</sup> I do not intend to consider here the influence of society and the collision with other selves, nor to date the origin of that perception. The discrepancy of the symptoms of pain and pleasure in another body with the feelings in mine no doubt operates strongly as soon as it does operate. It is, however, possible to exaggerate the importance of the social environment. To say, Without other selves no self *at all*, is surely going too far. It would be, perhaps, as true to say, If other selves did not exist, we should certainly invent them. But it is not necessary, and I think not permissible, in psychology to make either assertion.

implies the former, I will keep to activity. The general idea, I presume, is that of an alteration of A not taken as belonging to anything outside, but as a change of something beyond A which realizes something which in A was ideal. This may be quite indefensible, but it is, I think, what we mean generally when we use 'activity'. And when we come to the soul and the perception of our own activity, it is perhaps going too far to say that without an idea of the change no rudimentary form of that perception would come.<sup>1</sup> But, in seeking for the minimum that must be apprehended, we cannot postulate less than a concrete and limited self-group, and a following alteration of this as against its limit. Further, the origin of this change is not to be referred to an other, nor do I think the mere absence of such a reference would be enough. The origin, as well as the process and result, must be felt to belong to the self-group, and for this the change must ensue, not only from the permanent character, but also from a present occasional feature. Now I do not deny the theoretical possibility of an ultimate state of mind holding all these constituents and so yielding the idea of activity on reflection. What I deny is the presence of one shred of evidence for the existence of such a state. That 'motor' feelings of any kind should supply such a complex seems to me quite preposterous. And what I cannot understand is how, without some apprehension of a concrete self with limits, and its change in time as arising from itself, anything like activity can exist *for the soul*.<sup>2</sup> And with all due respect for those who hold to (and some of whom build I know not what upon) the ultimate character of activity or resistance, I am left to conjecture that either they attach no definite mean-

<sup>1</sup> The account of this matter (*E. x*), to which I must refer, should be so far modified. Further, I did not mean to convey that I myself took *desire* to be essential. My own view is opposite to this. I must excuse myself from entering further into Mr. Ward's criticisms (*M. o.s. xii. 45-67*), on the ground that they seem based upon misunderstandings which a comparison with the present article may remove.

<sup>2</sup> The soul may, of course, have been 'active' long before *for the outside observer*. So used the phrase is harmless so long as it is felt to be unnecessary, and is merely *used*. See above, pp. 195-6.

ing to these terms, or else some meaning which is foreign to them, or else that they have never made any serious attempt to analyse that which they set down as irreducible.

We have reached the knowledge of an object other than my self and in relation with it. We have to advance to the idea of something real by itself and independent of its connexion with my feeling-centre. We may deal with this briefly. The object recurs often and, in itself and in its environment, is mainly the same, hence it seems permanent and identical. But, on the other hand, it is variable; and of its features some depend upon foreign relations, while others, because more constant, are not seen to be relative. And the relative part, because discrepant, belongs not to the thing; the thing (what is left of it) exists out of relation. The result of this advance is, of course, inconsistent, and raises problems which psychology has not to take up. There is no need to exhibit its progress in detail. There are emotive attributes which the object palpably has and has not. A sword hurts when it cuts me, but when it cuts something else it may give pleasure or nothing. What then has it got, and what does it give? Further, when at rest it certainly does not cut, and yet we call it cutting. Again, not only do things vary, but they vary and persist in spite of my pleasure and action, and, at least to some extent, are not changeable by me. To that extent, then, up to which my changes do not alter them, they are real altogether apart from my existence. And, where language comes in, because for others as for me, and again because in some points *not* for others as for me, the object becomes partially free from us all. What is discrepant collides and sets at liberty the remainder which has not come into collision.

It is now easy to advance to the distinction between things and my thoughts about them. Disappointment reflected on brings knowledge of error, and language of course co-operates largely. Desire and expectation have to yield to the thing. They cannot alter it, and it decides whether they succeed or not. Whatever they may be, and whether they exist or do not exist, and when one man

thinks this and another man that, the object is, and becomes, what depends on itself. If our expectations, then, are not to fail they must depend upon things—things not merely now and here, but in the distance and in the future. And the fact, more or less invisible, controlling our thoughts which without it end in failure, has now been developed. This is the theoretical object, though the interest we take in it is still mainly practical.

But in thinking, it may be said, I am aware that I act; I *make* an alteration, and this is a difficulty. And for metaphysics, without doubt, a grave problem arises; but not for psychology. Objects are found to possess qualities regularly though not always; take, for instance, colours. Hence an object may be changed, though not in itself, and therefore only for us. Again, the thing for me is altered when I change my position, turn my head, close my eyes, or cease to touch with my hands. But it comes again as before, and changes regularly on my movement. Still, my movement did not change it, because I find it as before. It could not change it, because in the interval the thing acts as it would act if its qualities were there. And for others again, independent of my movement, the changes take place, and are no change for me. Hence these movements do not alter the fact, but ourselves. It is the same with the invisible object of thought. That develops on my action, but I do not control it, as baffled expectation at once makes manifest. And so here, as before, there are actions about the thing which change only me. As the light shows us colours or darkness conceals them, while the colours in themselves remain what they are, so thought gives us, like true light, the nature of reality, or like twilight and mist presents us with appearance, or like darkness with ignorance. But the object is what it is, and, so far only as in action we suffer its control, does our thought remain true. As to the nature of the control our early reflection has nothing to say.

We have seen how thought is objective, but we have not yet reached the goal which, at the beginning, we set up.



The object was not that which excluded my self, for we saw that my self is also an object, and we have to find how it becomes one. It is easy to see the way in which my body, first in some aspects and at some times and then altogether, can be distinguished from my self. And it is an object which obviously we are interested in knowing. So, too, my internal states, and my self as the thing which possesses these qualities, come naturally to be thought of. The one process, that combines and sunders through individuation amid discrepancies, goes on working to the end. The feeling-core with its early and its acquired constituents is a hard thing to reach, but the interest is unceasing. If this and that cannot really be the thing itself which feels, what in the end can it be?

Thought has an object and subject, but these are not fixed compartments or parts in the self. Any process, as we saw, which preserves identity of ideal content is thought and is objective. But why an *object*, we may insist, since this means *not* subjective? It is an object, we reply, because it is distinct from and regulates other psychical movements, and these by contrast are subjective. Even in the highest self-consciousness, where my self is the object, the distinction persists. It is not possible to have a state where, beyond the content of the object, there are not psychical elements which exist and interfere and need constant control. Pure self-consciousness as a state where perceived and perceiver are psychologically at one, and where existence no longer jars and struggles with content, is no actual condition. There is always something to control, and in this sense thought remains for ever objective.

But, we shall be reminded, not only does thought exercise control, but it does so consciously. It has an end and a standard, and this calls for explanation. We may ask first how thought comes at all to be critical or 'normative'; next, in what the standard consists; and in the third place, *why* it is thus and not otherwise. (*a*) Since control by the object is found satisfactory, the idea of that control, of course, interests and moves, whether always as the object of desire I will not ask; and the character of this control of

course comes to be generalized, and so moves in a more and more abstract form. (b) What in the end is this character, cannot be discussed here at length. We found it to consist in identity or individuality of content. (c) Why it is thus and not otherwise, is a difficult question. We can see at once that, if the object is either changed for another or taken incompletely, there will be practical failure. And the mind, it will be urged, has simply followed this line of most pleasure and least pain, and its experience has cohered and is perceived as an axiom. On this I wish to say first that an axiom or a postulate, or a criterion in general, if we regard its *validity*, falls outside psychology. For that science it is merely a general character which moves, which brings rest when successful and unrest when defeated. We are confined simply to the origin and nature of an axiom as it comes into the course of psychological events. Now, if this standard has been produced merely by what has happened to succeed, it seems strange that its principle should be precisely what operates at the start and in the earliest association. Is that only a coincidence? Or shall we suppose that the type of our first rudest movement has also somehow resulted from natural selection? Perhaps so, but I would remark that, unless we will be resolute and make the nature of things result from a struggle and a survival among bare possibilities, then an account of this sort cannot go back for ever; and psychology, I should have thought, has to make its start from *psychical* ultimates. We must begin then without anything like mental association, and try to show (I suppose) how its laws have been made by conjunctions of presentations, which gave pleasure and pain (or at any rate succeeded or failed) and somehow led to these laws. I cannot here criticize such a doctrine, and will say only in passing that if it understands itself it will make psychology an appendix to physiology. I am contented with the view that for psychology the law of individuation is an ultimate, and that this law has succeeded, because it answers to external events in a way which to psychology is itself once more an ultimate; and that, thus succeeding, it becomes an end and a standard

for thought and feeling and will, according to the special conditions of these processes.

If we ask further as to its connexion with pleasure and pain, and raise the doubt whether our 'norm' satisfies directly and in its own right, or has now got pleasure conjoined with it because circumstances connect pleasure with success, and *it* has somehow happened to succeed, I cannot here answer fully. But I see no reason to doubt that the realization of our principle is pleasant directly, just as much as when our self succeeds against the environment. And I think an inquiry into the conditions of pleasure would show that in the main those results please which are the same in character with the result of our principle. It will be the feeling in both cases of one self-realization diversely produced.<sup>1</sup> To ask a question beyond this would be to enter metaphysics.

We have now pointed to the essential feature of thought; we have seen the machinery which works in all psychical processes; and we have hurriedly shown how from a basis of mere feeling this machinery develops the function of thought with its subject and object. And, did space permit, we could easily complete and verify our explanation by exhibiting volition and emotion, in their contrast to thought, as other developments by the same machinery from one single foundation. But there are theoretical activities which have not been explained, and I must endeavour in what remains to indicate how these confirm our previous account.

There is a difficulty which kept me for some time at a stand. Thought is certainly a function of analysis and synthesis, and the synthesis is plainly an application and development of Contiguity. But what is the origin of analysis? True (as I have pointed out in my *Principles of*

<sup>1</sup> The conditions of pleasure can, I think, be reduced to harmony (including pureness) and expansion, answering to consistency and completeness in knowledge. But whether, as in knowledge, the two will fall under one head is not a simple question, and I shall reserve my opinion for another opportunity.

*Logic*), the synthesis must analyse, since the competition of different redintegrations forces elements apart while holding them together. But take a case where I set myself down to discriminate, where I say to myself, I will investigate this object or analyse this sensation. We can indeed see how synthesis largely assists us, but in the end there will be something which cannot so be explained. And the true explanation is that the idea of discrimination works further by blending. I will exhibit this briefly, beginning first with the involuntary perception of difference, and then dealing with analysis.

As I have remarked above, discrimination is in one sense inexplicable. We are unable to make the transition from the fused to the relational condition of mind, in such a way as either to see *how* this particular result did come, or to feel simply that it must be so and that no further explanation is required. But the result is explicable in this sense, that we can retrace the collision which goes before it and see how it contains the warring elements in solution. There are two thoughtless extremes against which we must guard. In the first, sensations are different, and that is distinction. In the second, distinction supervenes, and that somehow makes difference. Each has one side of the truth that (explicit) difference implies distinction, and distinction rests on (undiscriminated) differences. The first error forgets that my sensations may be different and I not know it: while the second does not reflect that the very best faculty wants some machinery; and that, if without due cause it wildly throws out relations, then it explodes at haphazard and its missiles stick by pure chance.

If we had discrete presentations in series or together, that would not give even the faintest beginning of distinction. If there is to be a change, it, I hope, begins to be a truism that something must change and, if so, *therefore* must endure. If we are to feel change, then in feeling some element must be continuous. It is of no use to bring in the Ego, for the mind in general can do nothing in particular or at all. If the identity is to work it must be determinate and special; but this offers no difficulty. Our presented

whole from  $X(abc)$  becomes  $X(abd)$ , and gives identity with diversity. How will this go on to work? For mere shock and collision, we must remember, may shatter wildly the contents of our mind and cause pain and unrest; but to have collision in one's mind, and to feel it as such, are hardly the same. Mere invaders that seized on us and dropped us in turn, that fought furiously in our precincts and well nigh pulled us asunder, would be nothing to the purpose. We feel the struggle that we make, and by *we* I mean simply our presentations. The collision is made when, with  $X(abc)$ — $X(abd)$ , the persisting  $X(ab)$  has two differences,  $c$  and  $d$ , either of which it can restore by Contiguity<sup>1</sup> against the presence of the other. Itself, therefore, when one of these elements is banished, reacts, and bringing in the other produces a collision located in one point by a basis of identity. Again, if the two groups are there together, their identities,  $X(ab)^1$ ,  $X(ab)^2$ , blend, and so force  $c$  and  $d$  to struggle for existence. It is this conflict of the soul against itself which begins to be felt as difference.

The very lowest perception of change implies a basis of identity with incompatible differences, in and through which that struggles against itself and so gets for a moment the feeling of relation. The same process, developing itself under special conditions, results in the perception of various relations in which the two elements in their connexion come to consciousness at once. These special relations present us with a number of difficulties, made more difficult by the fact that our space-perception now qualifies and overlays the whole field. I can but emphasize in passing the essential point. There are *no* qualities which in themselves are incompatible. They may be naturally incompatible in the sense that our machinery is not able to present us with both of them together, under some con-

<sup>1</sup> Where there is an after-sensation the mind has a little less to do. But to take the existence of an after-sensation as being by itself a solution is, of course, quite thoughtless. Not what it is, but what it does, is the point to consider, and, if it acts, it acts by ideal redintegration on the basis of partial blending.

ditions or at all.<sup>1</sup> They are *all* again ideally incompatible, if we try simply to identify them (without blending); and *all*, on the other hand, reconcilable, if we distantly couple them by means of relations. They are not really reconciled because the differences are all there, and the relations are not a harmony of these opposites, though they enable us to get round and to ignore the collision of unity and diversity. And if thought is a faculty of relations, it is thus for ever condemned to inconsistency and makeshift. But what I would emphasize is this, that the one law of Individuation brings on the conflict, and then (practically though not theoretically) disposes of the problem by means of a relation. This is why 'contraries' are most hostile, because the more special the identity the severer the struggle, if that struggle arises. But these forms of relation, which make experience what it is, are not (so far as I see) to be deduced from first principles. We are unable to reconstruct their specialities, though the necessity for them and their main character may be understood. And what we find everywhere, when elements are held apart and in relation, is a basis of identity which ideally connects them—even though that basis be not special and now appear to us no more than their co-presentment as members of one total given state of the feeling-centre.

In discrimination we get a result of variety in unity, and when we go about to distinguish or purposely analyse, what happens is this. The result of distinction becomes an idea,<sup>2</sup> and, when we will, we have that idea over against a presentation. I have an object A and the idea of variety, the latter present now as the idea of a variety in A, call it

<sup>1</sup> I cannot enter here on the difficult question as to the part played by quality as distinct from quantity. The view that in *all* presentations there is a common basis admitting of degrees would have considerable bearing here.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. my remarks on Comparison (*M. o.s.* xi = *E.* ix). Mr. Bosanquet criticized these (*M. o.s.* xi. 405-8) in a way that I found very interesting, and I admit that I was wrong in making alternate subsumption *always* necessary. In some cases we do without it, but in others I think this is certainly not possible. We cannot always go from A to B with a point of comparison. We may find that first in returning from B to A.

A(bc). And this variety may be general (we may want to make any distinction that we can), or it may be more or less special, call it Ay(bc). Now, how will this idea work? It will work first of all obviously by means of Contiguity. Striving to particularize itself, the idea of itself accomplished will restore anything connected with that accomplishment. This is the way in which Contiguity is known to find means for an end, and there is no need to dwell on it. The idea of A somewhere exhibiting variety leads to restless movement about the whole field of it; the idea of its showing this or that variety leads to particular search, as when a beast surveys a region for its prey or its enemy. And so far the idea of distinction working by contiguity explains analysis.

But there is another side which we noticed when, above, we spoke of blending, and which this latter process alone, I think, will make clear. When I scrutinize the object of sense or of thought, I find that, on my attention and the presence of my idea, its features grow diverse. It is as if, so to speak, my will had served as a microscope, as if I were turning the screw and the detail were coming out. And here doubtless, working side by side with contiguity, we have the process of fusion. In the first place the idea gives strength to answering elements (*E. x* and *xi*) which were there and were not noticed, or which come there on fresh presentation when their supports are strengthened. We may think here of the perception of obscure sensations, or again of the action of fixed ideas and moods on the environment. But we have a second case where the variety is *produced* by our wills. We may illustrate this by the play of our thought or imagination. I think of a man, and then of a hundred men, and then further I group and divide these hundred men at my pleasure and, as we say, quick as thought. We have blending here which (with contiguity) transforms the picture before us. The suggested features, it is true, do not strengthen given detail, and so far there is no blending. It is the *basis* of the suggestion which is presented also in the picture, and, by blending, that basis overpowers what is given, partly drives

off its detail, and substitutes in part or altogether the detail of the idea. I am far from wishing to underrate the work done by redintegration, but though that work is essential, yet in some respects, and particularly when volition comes in, it is not enough. In the use of blending we must, of course, see that there are elements to blend; but with that precaution our psychology would, I think, find it a key to unlock several puzzles. The failure of psychology with regard to the creative imagination can, I think, in part be so removed. And at all events, in my judgement, blending explains the origin of voluntary analysis.

There are other difficulties which, no doubt, will occur to the reader. If I had space I am confident that I could deal with most of them; but in conclusion I can do no more than sum up the distinctive features of thought. Thought is, first, not the whole psychological process. There are always other elements which compete with it for existence within the subject. And so thought is objective, not because its content excludes the self, but because it has to control tendencies, which fall outside itself and solely in the course of my psychical events. Thought is 'normative', because its process has a standard and end. The result produced by that movement becomes a principle which itself moves, first unawares and then with slowly increasing self-consciousness. And this end struggles both for room to exist within my mind, and strives also against its own defects and failures. Thought once more is 'necessary', because its end is able to compel. Within itself one element is because of another, and outside itself it can force competing tendencies. And it is 'universal', assuredly *not* because always abstract, nor again because *always* possible for more men than one, but because its connexions are independent of this or that man's private liking, and transcend the immediate deliverance of sense. And it is an obvious 'activity', because succeeding it expands the group of the self, and that expansion in its origin and its result is attributed to the subject. Its end, Individuality, must gain all its material from the flux of presentation, but from the



very start it ignores 'thisness'. Irrespective of the moment's confused deliverance, the content it takes up is applied to qualify every other context. That what is must be and is eternal, is the principle of all our psychical movement; and this builds up not thought only, but emotion and will. Thought, however, in its character diverges from these. It cannot make presentation, and, where thought is volitional, where its idea, that is, produces its content particularized in psychical existence, still thought and will are different. To the thought, realized as thought, its mere psychical existence is something necessary, but still *per accidens*—while the essential end of will is reality within the series of psychical events. And, as thought cannot make phenomena, it contents itself without them, and is therefore symbolic and not existential. And, aiming at a totality which events never give, it converts their degradation to ideal uses, while it builds its own world out of them, and lives both in them and apart. And building piecemeal, as it must, it becomes relational, and is free to choose its own relations. Its individuality could not be perfect until all its distinctions were harmonized in one system; and it is therefore driven to an infinity of analysis and synthesis, striving to include all variety within one identity.

Thought, we may say, is the process which aims at and is controlled by individuality, an end, however, to be realized not in existence but solely in content. And, as against will and feeling and the perpetual flood of incoming sensations, it is the process controlled by the identity of the *object*. But, if we ask whether thought is wholly self-satisfied, if it feels not only its internal defects but its estrangement from existence and from feeling and will, if it does not long for a fuller, a more concrete, completion, in which *as thought* it would no longer survive—we must go elsewhere for an answer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I feel it right not to omit the 'Law of Duality'. I made its acquaintance some years back when engaged on Logic, and was quite content to ignore it. Now that Mr. Ward has endorsed it, I think I ought to say briefly why I have never accepted it. (1) In the first place I cannot see how the Law comes from Apperception or Attention. The derivation may have been

accomplished, but I am quite unable to follow it. (2) The arrangement of thought's content into pairs, and into wholes whose materials throughout are subordinated by couples, is, I think, not always fact. I have elsewhere (*L. bk. iii, pt. i, cc. 1 and 2*) pointed out cases which I at least could not reconcile with this Law; and, until I see that done, I must be allowed to doubt if it is possible. (3) So far as the Law expresses fact, it seems to me obviously secondary, plainly derivative. Thought is compelled to be relational, to move by the aid of relations and piecemeal; and, as with relations the minimum is one with two terms, we may say, if we please, that thought's process, *so far as it is confined in its movement and its result to relations*, is in this sense dual. (4) I think that, if we must have a faculty, one of Discrimination would be far more useful than Attention is. The attempt to explain, not Duality by Attention, but Attention by Duality (as Distinction or Comparison) has, I should say, been the more successful of the two. I can, of course, accept neither. (5) Duality *might* mean that in the end thought is ruled by the category of subject and attribute. If so, that statement would require a thorough explanation.

### XIII

## WHY DO WE REMEMBER FORWARDS AND NOT BACKWARDS?

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TO the reader who is new to this question it may wear the appearance of a paradox. He may reply that to go forwards is obvious and natural. But if I ask why should my memory go only one way, why should memory move never from the present to the past—he may find that what seemed obvious seems now merely false. Still, if he attends to the subject and confines himself to bare memory; if he discounts, that is, the cases where we reach the cause from the effect, or in general reconstruct a whole from its interdependent parts;—he is likely to admit the existence of the problem. And he may accept the conclusion that the reproduction of a series has but one possible direction, from the earlier to the later. Whether with Professor Bain he will add this tendency to a long list of ‘ultimates’ (*M. o.s.* xi. 469), or will try to find some explanation, I cannot foretell. For myself, though I of course accept the fact of this general tendency, I am not sure that it has no exceptions. I do not believe in the *impossibility* of remembering backwards, and even doubt if sometimes that does not happen in fact. And, so far am I from accepting our habit as an ultimate, that I venture to find no difficulty in seeing how it was acquired, or at all events may have been so.

I ought perhaps to begin by attempting to explain how it is possible to reproduce a time-series at all. This would be a far more serious task, and I cannot here undertake it. And so the question must be simply as to the direction of the recall. ‘Yes,’ a reader may suggest, ‘the problem is, why, when time itself goes forward, memory is tied also to that direction.’ But this is not the way to put the question, and we must begin by purging ourselves of such ideas about time. The stream of events does not really run from the

past into the future, and it is easy to see that this flow is our own construction. We find, on reflection, that we really do not perceive the future and the events past and present streaming onwards and into it. What we think we see, upon reflection, is a succession of events, in which what we call the present constantly, in part at least, becomes new, and in part slips away backward into what we call the past. And this construction, by which time flows backward in a stream, bringing new things from the future, and carrying old things to the past, is more natural than the former one (Lotze, *Metaph.*, §§ 138 ff.). Indeed the reader at this point may define the problem thus—Why, since events go backwards always, does our memory of them always take the other direction?

But further reflection shows us that this question still has failed to see the point to be explained. In speaking of a stream of time, we forget that a mere stream, if regarded by itself, cannot have a direction. It does not flow towards one point rather than another, or indeed towards any point at all. And hence, until we have more than a mere stream, until a qualitative point is taken as an end, there can be no meaning in direction. Again, a stream, if it is to be a real stream, must possess an identity of what flows. If we did not have the same water in different positions, if we had always other waters, then to speak of a stream would be to use words without a meaning. We must try to apprehend more clearly what is implied by such a phrase as a current of events; and let us help ourselves with the following scheme:—*abc—acd—adc—acf—afg—*.

In this we may regard *a* as being constantly increased or continually diminished. We may look on the original position of *a*, with its earliest possessions, as receding backwards with each change, or, on the other hand, as going forward and as gaining constantly. And the difference comes from the way in which the new is considered as standing to the old in the different cases. But again, if we please, *a* may be stationary, and the stream may flow past it, as—*bc—cd—de—ef—fg—*. What then is the direction of the current? It may be running for ever into

an ideal reservoir, say on the left hand beyond *bc*, or going forward continually to a point on the right hand beyond *fg*. Thus, if the stationary *a* be one of the Egyptian pyramids, it may seem grounded and left behind while events have flowed forward, or the survivor of a tide which has swept all else back into oblivion. And since all motion is relative, the stationary (we must remember) seems in certain conditions to take on an opposite movement.

But I fear the reader has had enough of these formal reflections. It is not a stream in general which we have to do with, but the stream of *our* events. And here we have the essence. It is our psychical states which furnish both the flood and all the matter which flows or which stands against the stream. In the succession of these states it is the group of self, more or less unvarying, that has the place taken by *a* in our scheme. And it is the attitude of this group towards the incoming new presentations on which everything turns. It is this relation which gives a meaning to *direction*, and shows the essence of our problem. Why is it natural for us to look upon Time as running forward? It is because *we* go forward with it, marching willingly to our increase or dragged captive to our decay, but in either case going to meet fresh experiences. Or why does Time run backward from the future? Because *we* do *not* go back, but still hold our own against change, and force the incoming to minister to our constant identity. And time goes backward once more when our life slips backward with it, when what we are appears a stone that marks the growing space beyond which our self for ever recedes from us upon the ebb. But again we may be stationary through some blessed hour, anchored in some quiet backwater, a still eddy beside the torrent of things, out of the world—so we feel it. Here, if events hurry forward to the future, or are whirled backward into the abyss, it is all one to us, since we ourselves *are*. But we are stationary once more, when all we have fails to interest and when the new seems merely old. It all (we feel) makes no real difference, is all the same thing over again; *we* do not

move; and if events go forward still as they did before, or if, on the other hand, it is nothing new that is coming from the future;—this is a question that is indifferent. Time has here again hardly a direction.

Let us turn now to our problem about the order of reproduction. We have seen that the direction of mere Time does not help us even to ask the question rightly. And we can see now better how to ask it. Why is our memory directed towards our incoming sensations, and towards the side from which change comes? It is so (we may say, in the first place) because our thoughts in general naturally take this road. And why they take it appears to me almost obvious. The answer, in a word, is practical necessity. Life being a process of decay and of continual repair and a struggle throughout against dangers, our thoughts, if we are to live, must mainly go the way of anticipation. This, when we attend to it, seems quite evident and a mere commonplace. In a creature placed low down in the psychical scale no such thing as memory can even exist. And, though to say that its thoughts are occupied with the future would be barbarous psychologically, still the ideal qualifications of its sensations correspond in the main to future changes of its state by approaching sensation and action. And, if this were not so in the main, of course the creature would be destroyed. And hence, when after a long time memory is developed, it naturally takes the habitual mental direction. We are like a boat anchored on a tide, a boat that ceaselessly decays, and that, to maintain itself, must gather material from what comes floating down; and not only this, for there sweep down impending masses which threaten it. Now if, in order to gather material and to ward off destruction, we turned habitually towards the wrong end of our vessel, how, if such a thing were possible, could it fail to make an end of us? And then, when after a time we get strength to rest, and to recall some great benefit secured or great danger avoided, what is more natural than that still our thought fronts the same way, and, fixing an ideal point behind, goes on forward to meet again past experiences

face to face? We have no practical interest in the mere course of events, and merely to drift with it can be nothing to us practically even in imagination. We are concerned practically with what meets us and what we go to meet, and this practical concern has formed the main habit of our thought. This, I think, is the real solution of our problem.

And we must remember also that a backward direction in thought is the road away from our present selves. These present selves interest us most, and in the main we tend to see the past in its relation to them, and so to take the path forwards from the past that brings us home to them. But if we felt that our selves were lying in the past, we should so far tend to go back. Thus in old age or under abnormal conditions, where the present interests us little, we are said to live in the past. But here recurrent natural wants must still keep up in the main the acquired habit of our minds.

Our thoughts seem really to go back when the exclusive object of interest is placed far behind us, and we retrace towards it every unwilling advance that has carried us away. Each event adds a link, but our mind moves from each later link back to the earlier; we are interested in each solely as a thing to be passed by, in the order which carries our thoughts home. And, I apprehend, memory may here travel back from the later to the former, because for our interest the earliest is the end. Thus, when we steam against the sea from our native shore, if we thought of ourselves we should go forward against the waves. But as our hearts are left behind, we follow each wave that sweeps backwards and seems to lengthen the interval. And, in remembering objects passed by upon the waters, I think, contrary to our main habit, our memory might take the road that leads to our desire. But nature here, not less than elsewhere, soon effects a change in the course of our thought.

## XIV

### ON PLEASURE, PAIN, DESIRE, AND VOLITION

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THE object of this paper is to indicate briefly the nature of Pleasure and Pain, Desire and Volition. Its limits and its methods are those, I hope, of strict empirical psychology,<sup>1</sup> but within these limits it will be understood that I cannot even touch upon all parts of the subject. And for this reason I must give to points of disagreement a space out of due proportion. Those who know the subject will know both the amount of substantial agreement among psychologists, and again how very little in what follows is specially mine. I must first very rapidly sketch the main features of Pleasure and Pain, then go on to Desire, and in conclusion try to seize the essence of Volition. And I am forced to warn the reader that my present limits compel me to count upon a greater effort from him than I ought, perhaps, to expect.

#### I

To say that what we call sensations in *every* case must be coloured by pain or pleasure is to go beyond our knowledge; but without sensation we never have pleasure or pain. Not a pleasure, but something pleasant is what we experience, and the actual fact is an event which, together with duration, has quality and tone, and an intensity of

<sup>1</sup> I have tried to define these in *M. o.s. xii. 355* [*E. xii. 205, note 2*]. There are two main errors to be avoided. The first makes the soul a mere serial collection of states. The second treats it as a thing somehow outside psychical phenomena, which can be acted on and can react. The second mistake becomes aggravated when this thing is called the Ego. I will use this opportunity to thank Mr. Ward for the space which (in *M. o.s. xii. 564-75*) he has given to a refutation of my views. I regret that inability to identify myself with the doctrines which he has criticized has deprived me throughout of any profit from his labours.



each. If we like to apply the term aspect, or side, or moment, these are all open to objection, as metaphors must be. But what they try to say is that, as a sensation is not, as a matter of fact, a thing given separate from its psychical context, so pain and pleasure do not exist apart from sensation, any more than duration or intensity are ever discovered by themselves. They are all alike presentations,<sup>1</sup> as being elements within the presented whole. They are all of them distinctions, and we might call them, all alike, the creatures of our attention. Indeed pains and pleasures have no qualities of their own. It is the quality of the sensations, or arrangements of sensations, which we place to their credit. The kinds of pain which have been urged in disproof of the above, the feelings that shoot or that burn or gnaw, are each due to the special sort of sensation, or again to the temporal and the spatial orders of sensations, together with the rhythm of intensity in the pain. Thus pain and pleasure are mere aspects of mere psychical fact. They exist and they say nothing. Like sensations they are at first neither objective nor subjective. If I say that they are given simply, a subtle critic may object that given means sent to an Ego with another Ego's compliments, and that, if I were capable of knowing what I meant, I should inevitably mean this. Still I shall use the word, and for myself must decline the interpretation. That pleasure or pain, as they come first, have, in any sense whatever, a reference to the Ego is a fundamental error. It takes the products of development and places them at the starting-point, where no Ego (conscious or unconscious, whether for the soul or for the observer) exists except in false theory. In addition I would remark that even now there is no reference to the subject in some of our aesthetic pains and pleasures, and that there may never have been one. I would add further that in moments of

<sup>1</sup> I know of no argument for refusing this name to pleasure and pain which does not rest upon some dogmatic preconception. Suppose (e.g.) that they are not *essential* to presentation, does that go to show—when their (physical or psychical) conditions produce them—that they are not presented? Are warmth and cold not presented?

agony (as happens too before unconsciousness in swooning and under anaesthetics) it is most doubtful if Ego or non-Ego exists. Of course the phrases we *must* use imply what exists at our phrase-making level, but these implications are no argument against the existence of lower levels. To say 'I felt myself all one pain' is perhaps an attempt to deny the self which it asserts; as in—

'First 'twas fire in her breast and brain,  
And then scarce hers but the whole world's pain,  
As she gave one shriek and sank again.'

In short, of themselves pleasure and pain merely *are*; they have no meaning and no reference; they are at first certainly mere aspects of sensible quality, just as sensible quality, where their conditions exist, is a mere aspect of them.<sup>1</sup>

If we go on to ask for their physical conditions, they are taken to be connected one with physical benefit and one with injury. Whether they should be called accompaniments or results I shall not inquire; but whether the connexion is without exceptions must be considered. First, however, there are mistakes which we must place on one side. Pain and pleasure are not the feelings *of* anything at all, in the sense that they report it or in any way convey it (*E. x.* 197). Again, they clearly cannot go *always* with a general heightening and lowering of our vital forces, actual or even potential. Nor, further, is it possible to connect them with the *general* advantage or the *general* injury of the creature which feels them, unless that connexion is subject to most serious exceptions. We have to ask, then, if in any sense pleasure always goes with benefit and pain with injury. Lotze<sup>2</sup> has pointed out a way of answering in the affirmative. If the advantage and the harm are momentary and local, the exceptions might disappear. For example, a sweet poison does not injure by its sweetness, it rather locally so far benefits; and thus contrariwise with pains.

<sup>1</sup> I include *uneasiness* under the head of pain. As to the Ego, cp. *E. xii.* 216–17 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Med. Psych.*, 1852, pp. 237–9.

And Feeling, like the thermometer, tells what *is* now and not what will be hereafter. If this is true, then the law would be valid universally. What would remain unexplained would be the want of correspondence in some cases between the quantities of pleasure and benefit, and so again with pain. But I must leave this matter as it stands; and, again, the possible genetic derivation and development of the law cannot here be discussed.<sup>1</sup>

Can pleasure and pain (at least with regard to mere sensations) be connected simply with the quantity of the stimulus?<sup>2</sup> Certainly too much of anything might always be painful, but whether with everything there is a too-much is far from certain, nor is it certain that the painful, if one only could have less of it, would always become pleasant before it wholly ceased to be. And, without discussing views which I have no room to state, I will say simply that (so far as our knowledge goes at present, and without prejudice to the future) we cannot avoid connecting pleasure with sensible *quality*.

If we pass now to the *psychical* conditions of pleasure, all the result, which so far we are able to take with us, is the connexion of pain with damage and of pleasure with the opposite. We must see if on the psychical side more is visible. Can we say that pleasure is the result or the attendant of activity, and does pain again go with a hindered energy? First, I must remark that I do not know, and that I still am not ashamed of not knowing, what 'activity' means; but, speaking subject to that ignorance, I find the assertion not verifiable. There are surely pleasures and pains where to find what we should commonly call psychical activity is out of the question. And if the faculty

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Spencer appears not to be acquainted with Lotze's view. I understand Mr. Spencer to hold that pleasure may attend that which is in no other sense whatever good for the individual. He seems also to deny the existence of an intrinsic connexion between advantage and pleasure, and to believe only in a conjunction made by circumstances. If so, I think he much underrates the amount and kind of evidence wanted for such a conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> On this see Wundt. Horwicz (*Psychol. Analyses*) seems to me to have shown Wundt's failure, but to have also failed himself.

of Apperception or Attention, or again the Ego, is appealed to, I cannot say that I am shaken. Such a thoroughly retrograde step will hardly take us to anything beyond baseless assertions and illusory explanations (*E.* xii. 219). But if we are to keep to what we observe, and take an instance where we pass suddenly from a pleasant warmth to a painful heat, we cannot see that the hindrance of psychical activity makes the transition to pain. The pain appears to come given to us by a physical cause; there seems neither to have been nor to be a particular psychical activity in the case; and to take the activity as general (if there is general activity) would not account for the special seat of the pain.

I shall assume, then, for the present that the conditions of *some* pleasure and *some* pain are not psychical,<sup>1</sup> and, leaving mere sensible feelings, shall examine those which attend psychical movements or dispositions. The two main conditions appear here to be harmony and expansion, and we are at once led to ask whether, as was the case with the intellect, these two characters will fall under a single head.<sup>2</sup> I will begin the inquiry from the side of pain. There it seems to me that discord is the one constant feature. Mere loss, mere contraction of psychical existence, never pains us by itself. It does so only when some element feels itself thwarted or diminished, and for that we must have positive reaction and tension. If from the world which is dear to me you could isolate one fraction and extirpate it wholly, with all its memories and connexions, then I should never feel the loss of it. It is where the element with its connexions is left in part, and so reacts, that it becomes the seat of pain. Wherever we have pains whose origin does not seem physical, there we find a collision and a struggle of elements; and wherever we make a collision which is not rapidly arranged or subordinated, there we can always find pain. It is true that pains and pleasures, not of psychical origin, may enter into and even occasion the tension, as when the idea or the remaining smart of a wound makes the tension of fear, or the removal of some dainty

<sup>1</sup> The assertion of the opposite would in my opinion rest upon mere dogmatic preconception.

<sup>2</sup> [*Cf. E.* xii. 208, 230.]

the struggle of disappointment. It is quite true that a collision often goes with pleasure on the whole, because the state, taken on the whole, is not a state of struggle, but contains the discord as an overpowered element. But it remains true that, so far as pain is not in its origin physical, it arises with tension, and that, wherever you have collision, you so far must have pain. And I cannot think that Professor Bain is right in setting down surprise as a neutral state, even in the special sense which he assigns to the word 'neutral' (*M. o.s.* xii. 577). It may of course be even pleasant, but if you take it as bare surprise, that is, apart from any supervening apperception and expansion, it seems certainly painful. If we then accept the result that the psychical origin of pain is tension, can we extend this view to cases where the origin seemed physical? It seems possible, first, that in such pain there is an unconscious psychical conflict, a collision of psychical states, an inroad and a resistance. But the objection is that, though possible, such a view lacks evidence. The existence of the unconscious struggling element would be a serious assumption and one not called for. It is far otherwise if we say that *all* pain comes from tension, either physical or psychical, and in the former case from the alteration and the resistance of a physical condition. So far as I know, this is a view which physiology can sanction, and, if so, pain in all cases may be set down to discord.

Passing now to the conditions of pleasure, we may expect to find the opposite. I do not say that we *must* find the exact counterpart of discord; but, if we did not, we should be discouraged. Pleasure, we said, seems to accompany both harmony and expansion, and there is a question whether both will fall under one head. Let us try first with expansion. There is no doubt that in general a mere increase of the psychical area seems pleasant, and no doubt again that as a recovery the increase is usually more pleasant. Can we say, then, that pleasure *always* comes from an expansion, or from a maintenance which against an opposite is really an increase? If so, harmony, as the removal or the overpowering of discord, would fall under

expansion. To go so far as to call pleasure pain's mere negative would be an obvious absurdity. But, for all that, a precedent or a suppressed element might always be essential, and pleasure be dependent because a counter- if not a re-assertion. Or, if not that, yet perhaps the conditions, which would have gone on to pain, must be in part there for pleasure. Considered psychically, we may urge that every incoming sensation is at least to a certain extent an attack which necessitates reaction, and physiologically the stimulus required for the pleasant discharge may be taken as an invasion. Hence in both cases the positive will be really an expansion. In harmony too the variety is still negative against the unity. And in the mere 'relativity' of pains and pleasures an unanswerable proof seems found, for there a pain, because a recovery, becomes actually a pleasure. Briefly then, if pain is felt hindrance, a pleasure is felt furtherance against defect or opposition, and in either case is expansion; or, if you prefer a modification, it is always a counter- or a re-assertion. Is such a view the correct one?

I am not prepared to deny this, but, as before with activity, it is necessary to make assumptions quite beyond our real knowledge, or else to put an indefensible strain on the facts. It is not possible to find always a sense of defect as the condition of pleasant expansion. Again, in some pleasures, e.g. of smell, it is often impossible to verify a tension. Further, pleasures and pains are not wholly relative. And lastly, if expansion *per se* were pleasant, then mere contraction should be painful, which assuredly it is not. I shall return to these objections, but will first attempt to state a view which, though not free from difficulty, seems to interpret the facts with the use of less force. If pain is discord, pleasure may be taken as the opposite. But, if the opposite is harmony, then harmony is ambiguous, since it may imply either the overpowering of collision or its simple absence. And if the latter is an improper use of the term, let us by all means drop the word harmony. Let us say, pleasure is the feeling which goes with presentation when that has not got the conditions of

pain. A sensation is pleasant when not psychically or physiologically discordant. Pleasure thus will be the result of such positive conditions as imply the absence of pain. It will be the attendant either of *all* normal sensations, or of merely those where its (unknown) conditions of quantity or quality are present. The absence of hindrance does not constitute the pleasure, pleasure is essentially positive; but there would be no *inconsistency* in adding that its conditions must contain a variety—which *is* not painful but might become so if altered in character through quantity or quality.

Such a view seems to me to include all the facts, and it explains at once the pleasure of expansion. For, if mere positive sensation is *per se* pleasant, then more of the same will be naturally more pleasant. Expansion will make more of the same where the state was pleasure, or turn the scale where pleasure and pain were balanced. Just as increase of sugar is not sweet as mere increase but as presence of more sugar, so will it be with sensation; and expansion will be reduced to the head of mere position. And the same principle explains the pleasure of harmony proper. This enables us to have more of what already is pleasant, or to have without tension and with a balance of pleasure what would otherwise become painful. And we will now weigh our objection against the view that expansion *per se* is pleasant. We said that, if so, contraction should be painful *per se*, and *per se* it is not painful. It is painful only through repression and the tension of what is forced in. If we take the state where in full comfort a creature falls asleep, there its psychical area is progressively diminished, but it feels no beginning of pain. You may say that in repose other functions are set free, other sensations and also ideas come into being, while others are intensified, and that the change adds to the pleasure, so that in repose the soul might even be fuller than before. I admit all this, but if we keep to our crucial example of an animal which normally falls asleep after a healthy meal, it is all too little for the purpose. With every possible admission, it remains still a monstrous paradox to say either that

the psychical contents do not diminish or that the animal suffers pain. And, if so, contraction is not painful *per se*. It is painful where the removed survives still in idea, or is recalled and struggles for existence. And I admit further that this is usual. But where the idea fails, there contraction is not noticed. It becomes *bare* contraction and ceases at once to give pain. And I would press this strongly against the doctrine that expansion *per se* can be pleasant.

But our view that pleasure arises from unhindered position has to meet greater difficulties. We shall be told that pleasure is never pure, but that pain is of its essence, either as precedent or ingredient. I reply that, even were there no pure pleasure, yet the impurity might be external, like insoluble dirt in water. And secondly I deny the fact. I repeat the classical example of pleasures without want, where, if we keep to what is verifiable, we cannot find pain. And the fact again that in infancy (according to Preyer) pains come before pleasures seems to be without relevance, even if it were shown (as it is not shown) that in each case the special pain comes before the special pleasure. If we next go on to compare different levels of psychical life, we cannot find that the different balances of pleasure are merely in proportion to the contrasts which those lives contain. That a life monotonous, but without pain or care, could not at a low level be pleasant, seems to me a mere paradox, the offspring and again the parent of error. And I think such mistakes bring no real danger to our view. Its main difficulty arises from the pains of mere contrast and the pleasures of relief. It will be urged that one and the same state may be pleasant or painful because of its relations; that in pain, if I remember my yesterday's torment, my state becomes pleasant, and that my pleasure, if I think of all that I once hoped, may be turned to pain. How, if pleasure comes from what is positive, can these facts be explained?

The explanation is not easy, but still I think it is practicable, and there are three points to be considered. In the first place, the physical conditions may be so altered as to give an opposite result. In the second place, in the result



we may have new positive sensations. In the third place, we must allow for the influence of ideas. I will apply these considerations to the case where the commonly painful is now pleasant. (1) In the first place, our physical state may be so changed that the conditions of pain are in consequence not present. Where there is no discord there will be no pain. And this is true again psychically; for what was painful because it jarred, may by the suppression of its antagonist have lost its painfulness. (2) In the second place, though the pain remains actually present, it may be overbalanced by new pleasure. In partial relief we may still have pain there: but its *diminution* has set free those normal sensations and ideas, both from a physical and psychical source, the conditions of which were suppressed before by the greater pain.<sup>1</sup> The state may on the whole therefore be pleasant, and the fact that, if the pain were being increased rather than diminished, it would overbalance the pleasure though the amounts were the same is on our view quite normal. For it is the *newness* of the pleasant sensations, as they rise, which directs attention upon them, so that they preponderate and depress the rest which is painful. And, if the pain were increasing, its novelty would for the same reason overbalance the pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

These principles will explain a large part of the facts, but they do not explain everything. For, if we take a case where the state of relief continues, it may cease to be pleasant. Habituation to pain has limits, and on the other hand our healthy sensations lose freshness and get feeble. We become depressed, and the balance of our state is pain. Yet even here, if we remember a worse pain behind, our state once more may be pleasure; which, if pleasure is really positive, seems inexplicable. (3) Here we must fall back on our third principle—the influence of ideas. The idea of pleasure is itself a positively pleasant fact, and can so turn the scale. I will explain this briefly. It should be

<sup>1</sup> Volkmann, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, §§ 70, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Why novelty attracts attention, whether from a psychical or only a physical cause, I cannot discuss.

a commonplace that ideas are psychical realities, and we cannot represent without using a psychical fact. Further, what represents a pain must be a pain, and so again with pleasure. It is not true that the idea of the greater pleasure or greater pain must itself be a stronger pleasure or pain (*E. vi. 146*), but to think of a pain or a pleasure without *in some degree* feeling them is quite impossible. That is the first point. The second point is that, though pleasures and pains are not 'relative', our ideas of them are largely so. We think of feeling as a series, a scale which rises or falls from agony to delight; and in this scale more or less of pain or pleasure stands for less or more of the opposite. This way of thinking is to some extent a downright illusion, but it comes inevitably.

In our experience we pass frequently from pleasure to pain and from pain to pleasure—and, where this happens, the circumstance is usually one to which we attend. Beside other reasons for this which we noticed above, we must remember that, if pleasure removed survives in idea, this produces discord, and that in desire satisfied pleasure often comes after sharp pain. From all this comes a tendency to place pleasure and pain on one scale. Further it is familiar that, in passing from one sensation to another, the first is used in idea to interpret the second, so that our standard may be nothing but our last experience. Hence, judging by the difference which separates two sensations, and not remarking that the former was far removed from the average, we constantly exaggerate. And so the relief from pain which really in itself is still painful, is, because so far from what we suffered, figured as the opposite of that, and not as its mere absence. It seems the other extreme, and that in our experience has been pleasure. Taking this into consideration, I hope the reader will agree that our ideas become comparative, though our bare sensations of pain and of pleasure are not so.

But if the idea of relief is the idea of a pleasure, and if the idea is also fact, we can solve the problem of a painful condition which is pleasant. The idea of past pain is painful, but its degree, as a fact, is here inconsiderable. On the

other hand, in passing from what it represents to our actual painful condition, the divergence is so great that our present state is judged to be something opposite. It thus (apart from hope) is thought pleasant, and the idea or thought, as we saw, is an actual pleasure. Now this idea at once works both in proportion to its detail and also its degree.<sup>1</sup> It not only in itself is an ingredient of pleasure and tends to neutralize pain, but it acts positively in setting free what pain was suppressing, and again in intensifying the sensations which agree with its content.<sup>2</sup> In this sphere what *seems*, is. And it is idle to object that to mistake a pain for a pleasure is impossible. For the question is not of a simple pleasure or pain, the question is as to the balance in a mixed state; and there an error is both easy, and in addition goes on to make itself a truth. We need not appeal to cases of enthusiasm or mental weakness. We may see every day persons who feel well and happy when they are led so to think themselves, and who feel the opposite as soon as the opposite is suggested.<sup>3</sup> And it is, I think, clear that in the lower animals, where ideas can act less, the relief from pain affords also less pleasure. In short, our opinions may be relative when the facts are not so. And I venture to offer this with the foregoing as a solution of our problem, and in defence of the doctrine that pleasure is positive.

Finally, if the extreme doctrine of 'relativity' is brought in, and I am told that all sensation must depend on change and contrast, and that what is not relative (or even a relation?) is nothing, in that case I still refuse to allow, apart from special evidence, that pleasure is dependent on pain. But I shall admit that its conditions involve an opposite, in this sense that they contain a reassertion or even an expan-

<sup>1</sup> Lotze (*Mikrokosmos*, i. 231) is, I think, wrong here.

<sup>2</sup> The idea creates its reality by blending with a *basis* in sensation, and then forcing the rest (*E.* xii. 235-6).

<sup>3</sup> Preyer (*Seele des Kindes*, p. 76) has verified the fact that children can be made through suggestion to take a disagreeable taste for an agreeable one. He very properly illustrates from hypnotic states in the adult. There is of course error here, but so far as the idea has altered the sensation, there will not be a mistake about the sensation itself.

sion. But mere expansion will still not be pleasant *per se*. It will still be a principle that is subordinate to harmony. And harmony will be taken, not as simple position with the absence of discord, but as the positive unity which contains and overpowers opposites. I venture, however, to think that our former view explains facts with less setting up of our ignorance in the place of knowledge.

If we pass now from the conditions to the results of pleasure and pain, the first doubt which meets us is whether they exist. Just as it may be denied that pain or pleasure is ever produced by sensations or their relations, so it may be maintained that what at first seemed to be their effects is really due to other causes, and that the connexion is indirect. I do not think that in either case a disproof is possible, but probability is on the side of the doctrine that pains and pleasures can be produced, and also do react. But how they react, and what is the character of their influence in general, is open to doubt. I shall first state the opinion which seems to me most true, and shall then try to defend it. Mr. Leslie Stephen's view<sup>1</sup> is that pleasure represents equilibrium, a state in which there is a tendency to persist, and pain tension, a state from which there is a tendency to change. That is, I believe, substantially the view to which I had before been independently led, and which (in MS. only) I had expressed thus: 'The generalization nearest the facts would seem to be (1) Pleasure is conservative of rest or motion (2) Pain alterative.' I should now prefer to put it thus: The action of pleasure is to make the pleasant both dominant and steady, while the action of pain is to excite change away from what is painful—a statement which will require considerable explanation. I must call attention at once to an important distinction. In the action of the pleasant, and again of the painful, we have to separate the specific from the non-specific influence. *Every* incoming mental state can first act as a shock, and produce mainly a suppression of our existing state of mind and a lowering of all functions. Again, it may act as a stimulus, and call forth indirectly a current of new sensa-

<sup>1</sup> *Science of Ethics*, p. 51.

tions and ideas. And, lastly, intensity or duration may lead to exhaustion, either local or general. None of these effects, to say the least, is *always* specific. They need arise neither from pain nor from pleasure as such; and I will go on to point out what in my opinion does so arise and really is essential. If we take a psychical state and then suppose it to become pleasant, we observe that this state seems to usurp more mental space. It drives other states out, and lowers the relative intensity of those which remain. It weakens again the attack of fresh incoming states. Certainly to say that pleasure is intensity would be to me a mere paradox, and to say that all their effects are identical would be little better. But, so far as causing both persistence and dominance, pleasure seems to work like strength. And for this reason pleasure causes both motion and rest. Where the sensations or ideas are those which would produce motion, if sufficiently strong, pleasure takes the place of intensity and effects its result (see below). It does not move at all *per se*; it moves, or it prevents movement, on one and the same principle and merely *per accidens*. Once more, pleasure seems to produce movement by raising the whole tone, and by thus rendering the subject, so to speak, explosive; in such a state, that is, that on a stimulus movement follows with ease and plentifully. But this again involves no new principle. For in the first place the pleasure is to some extent a symptom, and is itself the effect of the general bodily condition. And, where it is the cause, it acts merely as intensity might act. It supports first of all the suggestions or the actual beginnings of change. In the next place, by adding strength without bringing collision, it causes an expansion of our general area which by itself is excitement. To this point I would direct the reader's special attention. The ordinary effect of any strong incoming psychical state is to produce a movement, and this tendency is not dependent on the pleasantness or painfulness of the state. What is true of the infant is true of every living creature, that every strong feeling tends to bring on a motor discharge.<sup>1</sup> Hence,

<sup>1</sup> Preyer, *Seele des Kindes*, p. 93.

where pleasure produces movement, its action is indirect. For, where the states which it emphasizes are connected with repose, by the same action it supports them against suggestions of movement, and its indirect effect is rest. Finally, where the pleasant exhausts and so decreases change, the same principle holds good. Either its action is not specific and it works simply as an intense and enduring state of mind, or else once more its specific action produces a particular effect, the same as that which would result from mere quantity of a particular suggestion.

If now we turn to pain, we must be careful still to discount those results which are not specific. Avoiding these we find its effect to be change and restlessness. It appears to move us *per se*, whatever may be its quantity. To the apparent exceptions I will return, and must attempt first of all to get clear on the principle. I said that pain excited change away from what is painful, and I must try to state this accurately. What seems most probable is that pain, coming from discord and conflict, reacts to make that more intense. The restless movements, in which the elements (physical or psychical) press and struggle against each other, become more violent, and that which reacts is stimulated to movements stronger and more extended in range. Hence a change which may result in the suppression of the source of disturbance. The line taken by this change will be either, so to speak, mechanical, or furnished by remedial associated movements. I see no good cause to suppose that pain has a direct negative action upon its source. The point to keep in mind is this, that if the changes fail to remove the pain, the disturbance is continued and extended and intensified; while, if the stimulation is removed, the movements die away, and the resulting condition is stable. Pain may on the other hand indirectly increase its cause and itself. For, if the reactive movements are unsuccessful, the tension grows as they are strengthened and by consequence the pain. Our domination by these movements forces attention upon that which is directly connected with them, and this, together with contrast, makes the pain more intense. That the general action of pain is

to increase the conflict that occasions it, is a view that works satisfactorily; the objection to it is that it seems to go beyond our knowledge in making pain arise always and everywhere from discord. But if for this reason we cannot accept it without some reserve, we may modify it thus. We may say simply that the general action of pain is to set up disturbance about the seat of its origin, a disturbance which continues and heightens itself until a result has been produced which removes its source. Pain on this view will not always cause tension and reaction; but it will cause local agitation, and continue that and widen it, until some change has brought relief. Upon neither view, so far, has pain a direct negative action; but if we choose to add that pain works directly towards lowering that which pains, so that change in the other direction has more chance of domination—that would be a tenable doctrine, but one I think quite uncalled for by facts. If, on the other hand, we can adopt the view that both the cause and the effect of pain is discord, that gives a unity to our doctrine, and is confirmed by the positive reaction of pleasure on its positive source.

And, so far as I know, all the facts would harmonize with this conclusion; while, on the contrary, that pleasure promotes and pain essentially checks action seems quite contrary to experience. Pain checks action when its continuance produces exhaustion—that is certain, and I do not doubt that its wearing effects are specific; while pleasures probably exhaust us not because pleasant but because intense. But the direct action of pain here is still to excite change, and its opposite influence through exhaustion is indirect and accidental. And it prevents motion again indirectly by suppressing those feelings which would otherwise produce it, and indirectly once more when by experience we have learnt that to move is to increase pain. But restlessness here takes other forms, or is diverted into some kind of restraining effort. Nor does fear paralyse because painful, but mainly because it otherwise prevents the feelings and ideas which are necessary for activity; and when the dreaded evil turns to real pain, the

creature struggles all too late. Restlessness, bodily and mental, is the chief effect of pain; the remainder comes accidentally. But as to the action both of pain and pleasure, we shall be clearer when we have got some light on Desire.

## II

Pleasure and pain are not desire, nor does either of them necessarily involve it, either originally or even at our stage of development. 'If' (as Mr. Spencer recommends, *Psych.*, i. 280) 'we substitute for the word pleasure the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there, and if we substitute for the word pain the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to get out of consciousness and to keep out,'<sup>1</sup> we are confusing consequence and condition, and are making a serious psychological mistake. If we take pleasures of repose and simple pleasures, as of smell, where no want has preceded, I at least am unable there to verify desire. And with pains the same conclusion, though less obvious, is not less certain. In dull constant pains, to assert that desire is always present would be surely a paradox. To be restless is not necessarily to *desire* a change. And if it is urged that pain means tension and tension desire, I reply that *psychical* tension is not always the cause, or even *always* the effect of pain; and that, if it were so, yet mere tension (as we shall see lower down) is not the same as desire. Nor, to pass to another error, is desire the idea of a pleasure or the pleasant in idea. For it is not true, in the first place, that you can have desire without tension; and, apart from that, in the second place, it is not true that pleasure in idea must be the object of desire. I intend here to treat these two errors as refuted,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This erroneous doctrine is held far too widely. The further substitution of 'desirable' as another 'equivalent phrase' for pleasure has led to further errors on the part of J. S. Mill and Professor Sidgwick.

<sup>2</sup> My justification is the fact that, so far as I am aware, no attempt has been made to deal with the objections which have been urged from various sides. In my *Ethical Studies*, 1876, if I may mention my own contribution, I discussed the question of desire and in the main, I still think, satisfactorily. Volkmann, whose acquaintance I have made much later, must be referred to (*Lehrbuch*, § 143). The only thing like an argu-



and to pass to something which I at least find more interesting.

Desire is obviously a state of conflict and of tension, and there is a doubt whether this tension is not the whole of desire. If we have an idea of a state of ourselves, which is impeded by our actual condition, and which struggles against it to become a reality—can we call this desire?<sup>1</sup> On this view pleasure and pain are accidental to desire, and the tension of the idea against fact is its real essence. Is this doctrine a true one? It will be seen lower down how far I can follow it in respect of volition, but as an account of desire I cannot assent to it, for I still believe that pain and pleasure belong to the essence. And it seems to me clear that we have thoughts, and thoughts of our own possible future, which try to come in and are impeded, and where yet desire is plainly absent. Among other states one is led naturally to think of expectation. Now, if the tension of an idea against fact makes desire, then all expectation must be desire, and this is maintained.<sup>2</sup> But, as I observe the facts, one can anticipate one's own neutral future without any desire; and even a misfortune, when one is resigned and is fully prepared, may be awaited without either fear or hope. And again, further, we may expect what we know *we* shall not see, and, surely sometimes, may do this without any desire. 'No,' I shall be told, 'there is always uncertainty and unrest and a desire to have an end of it. We want the removal of the tension through the victory of something expected.' But, I reply, we must

ment that I have found since is in Waitz (*Lehrbuch*, p. 421) who, to the objection that an idea of the pleasant may exist and yet not be desire, replies by an attempt to deny the fact. He says that, if the idea is not desired, it also is not thought of, and does not appear, *as* pleasant (now). But this rests on an ambiguity. To appear (*erscheinen*) pleasant may mean simply to be felt as pleasant, or to be thought of as pleasant. The former is beside the question, and to the latter I reply by asking: How could I have a doubt or a denial as to pleasantness under present conditions unless I entertained the idea? But is that doubt or denial a desire?

<sup>1</sup> Drobisch, *Empirische Psychologie*, p. 222; cp. Volkman, § 139. Waitz, p. 418, dissents.

<sup>2</sup> Drobisch, p. 98; cp. here Wundt, ii. 334.

distinguish. All tension may set up desire, and, if prolonged, usually does so—that is certainly true, while to say that it essentially *is* desire is not true, and it will repay us to dwell on this distinction. Why, in the first place, does expectation tend to pass into desire? We have an idea which tends to particularize itself (*E.* xii. 212–13) and, in the present case, not to complete itself ideally, but sensibly in presentation. What is presented on the other hand is now in some point discrepant, and hence a conflict which so far is neither desire nor expectation. It is so far not desire, because (to anticipate) the idea is not felt to be pleasant; and it is not expectation until the idea in its content has a reference to a subsequent and modified presentation.<sup>1</sup> Now, in expectation, the idea, *as* an idea, is not discrepant with the presented, but, as a mental state, it is so; and again, the time-relation (which makes expectation) has a tendency to drop out, and so to give rise to conflict. Further, disappointment may come in, and, while weakening expectation (proper), establish and aggravate the discrepancy. Hence, in all expectation may come a discord which produces pain, while, on the other hand, the idea is felt (and perhaps also expected) to relieve. At this point, when the idea is felt to be pleasant against an actual pain, desire has been created. We may illustrate this by the case of an expected operation. It is first looked forward to with sinking dread, but, if it is deferred, so much mental unrest may be produced that we find our present state intolerable. Quite apart then from any hope of an ultimate benefit we desire anything that will free us from present anxiety. Fear may thus, through its own pains, be turned to aversion against itself, and on the same principle with greater ease a neutral expectation, through its tension, may be transformed into desire. For this reason the view that *mere* expectation already is desire cannot be accepted. Nor do I think the pleasure from gratified expectation would be an argument in its favour. That is caused naturally by the expansion which comes when the idea is particularized, and which also comes at times from an access of fresh

<sup>1</sup> We see here how incorrect it is to say desire implies expectation.

sensations, where no idea has preceded, and no desire could have been felt. We must bear in mind further, with a view to avoid confusion, that there are many intellectual states which really do involve a strong desire for a result; but these states are not mere expectation, and pleasure belongs to their essence.

Our result so far is this. Desire is not mere pleasure or pain or the mere idea of pleasure, and it is again not the mere conflict of idea with presentation. We must add that want or craving or the pain of defect is not desire, unless these are taken to imply the idea of what is wanted. But from this mistake we may collect the positive truth that not only does a mere idea of pleasure fail to be desire, but, even when that idea is felt as pleasant, still desire may be absent because want is not there. Thus we may remember past delights and take joy in the remembrance, but feel no present wish to re-experience them because we are satisfied as we are. And unless an uneasiness precedes, or is developed, no desire arises. Thus for desire we must have three elements—an idea conflicting with reality, that idea felt to be pleasant, and the reality felt to be painful; and these elements<sup>1</sup> felt as one whole state make up desire (*E.S.* 266 = 239). Whether the whole is pleasant or painful depends upon circumstances (*ibid.* 290 note = 259). The moving element in desire is twofold—first the pain of want leads to change, and in the second place, apart from that, the idea tends to realize itself, mainly by Contiguity. The pleasure does not move except so far as it reinforces the idea, and adds, on the other side, to the pain by contrast. There are questions as to the *object* of desire to which I shall return; but I will first deal with some remaining difficulties as to pleasure and pain.

<sup>1</sup> I do not use 'feeling' as equivalent to pleasure and pain. I could not in a short space explain what I think the proper sense of the term. But the 'felt' answers roughly to the 'immediately given'; and, since this is one with its pleasure and pain, and, since these aspects are emphatically immediate and also prominent, they tend to usurp the word 'feeling'. This usurpation is, in my opinion, not justifiable, and, against the constant stress of language, can hardly be maintained consistently. Cp. Prof. Bain's remarks, *M. o.s.* xii. 376-9.

There are some points in what follows where I have to express my dissent from Professor Bain's views. I do not intend to criticize his law of Self-conservation either in principle or in all its details. My position towards it as a whole may be readily gathered, and I will use this opportunity to remark how much the psychology of the Will has been indebted to Professor Bain, and how much I feel that I have learned from him. But I cannot agree that pleasure tends in general to excite activity and pain to check it, and I will show how in some cases such a doctrine is incorrect. When on this view an animal approaches the fire, the pleasure of warmth excites the motion until the pain of heat checks it. But we have seen that, quite apart from pleasure or pain, an idea realizes itself (through Contiguity mainly). The idea of approach, once suggested, tends to call up the associated ideas and feelings, and they again the physical movement—and this apart from pain or pleasure. Professor Bain for other purposes has laid stress on this tendency of an idea to realize itself,<sup>1</sup> and I must direct attention to the same point here. If now we add the action of pleasure, as we understood it above, this idea of movement is supported and strengthened, just as it would be if it were *not* the idea connected with activity, but were another idea connected with repose. And I must go on to point out that the pleasures of repose have been somewhat strangely dealt with. If we take such an instance as rest in a warm bath, then upon our view we could truly say that the pleasure reacts to increase the special bodily functions, and again the sensations and ideas that are soothing our mind. But that would not satisfy Professor Bain's doctrine, and, if I do not misunderstand him, he is driven into surprising paradoxes. He states first that pleasure produces the activity of maintaining a *rigid attitude*, and secondly that, as we are, we *must be* active because we *should be* so [under altered conditions] if disturbed.<sup>2</sup> But the necessity surely for such paradoxes is a refutation of the doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> *Senses and Intellect*, p. 342; *Emotions and Will*, p. 390. Cp. the tendency of mental movement to persevere, *Senses*, &c., p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Mental Science*, p. 324; cp. *Emotions*, &c., p. 317.

And the same conclusion is forced upon us by the inhibitory action of pain. We saw above how and why pain, apart from exhaustion, does check action by stimulating change. The stimulation, however, according to Professor Bain, is wholly non-specific, and the pain simply lowers. But surely the necessity, which led to the conclusion that pain, as pain, does not cause movement, could have led far more easily to the same denial as to pleasure, or even to the assertion that pain, as pain, always heightens vitality and that its lowering action is not specific. And when, in particular, unpleasant taste is asserted *not* to set up facial movement, the theory comes into rude collision with fact; as it does once more when it maintains that in satiety eating stops only when 'we have run up to the bristling point of some pain'.<sup>1</sup>

If we are willing to enter further into the detail of desire, we shall see the workings of pleasure and pain more clearly. Let us take the case where an animal moves, or attempts to move, nearer to a dying fire. Here the actual state is felt to be disagreeable either because simply felt as chilly, or because hostile to the idea of greater warmth, which has survived and strives to realize itself, and which also by contrast works on the actual feeling. Or again the idea of more warmth through approach may be suggested by association as a relief, or once more a chance movement may bring it in through sensation. Hence comes desire, and in this there are several moving elements. The pain of chilliness in this case moves to produce a change; next, the idea of warmth moves to realize itself; thirdly, that idea is felt to be pleasant and has its own action increased; lastly, by contrast, the original pain is also increased, and, if the original state had been neutral, would now be created. The whole result is the felt tension which we call desire, and we can see that the source of movement is not single, and cannot be set down to mere pain and still less to mere pleasure. It is true that relief from pain is an idea which is pleasant, though it assuredly is not always the idea of a pleasure. It must always be felt as pleasant, so far as it

<sup>1</sup> *Emotions*, &c., pp. 330, 316; contrast Preyer, pp. 74 ff.

goes, and its pleasantness most certainly adds to its activity. Through such an idea of relief it is that in pain we are able to keep ourselves from moving. The movement or attitude that lessens pain becomes a working idea which keeps down restlessness, and to a certain extent does work because it is pleasant. But we falsify this truth when we transform it to the paradox that the whole of the activity comes from the pleasure.

The great importance of this question will perhaps justify further detail. Pain, it may be urged, must check action, because at least in some cases the pleasant activity could not otherwise cease. But this objection would forget that, as the pain of want goes, the pleasure loses its assistance; and that again, further, with physical change the positive conditions of pleasure may disappear. The mere tendency of the idea to realize itself survives, but in its weakened state this can be driven out by the ordinary competition of other ideas and sensations, and that without pain. And when further we are asked how, if pleasure does not move, a half-tasted satisfaction can intensify desire, it is not hard to make answer. In the tension of desire the idea of the movement is struggling and unsteady. Hence doubt may weaken desire and certainty may inflame it, not because desire implies expectation or belief or even clear consciousness, but because it does in some ways depend on the strength and steadiness of the idea. Now increase of pleasure does go to support the idea. And further in partial satisfaction the idea will probably be reinforced by sensations which have come in. And both of these influences again will cause excitement by expansion. Secondly, by the same influence, the pain of want will be increased and so the tension aggravated. And the natural result of the whole is that desire becomes more violent and moves more violently. We see the other side of this when the cup raised to the lips removes thirst before the drinking. That is not only because the pain of uncertainty is removed, but mainly also because the idea overpowers the reality. This is now viewed, not as thwarting the idea, but as itself passing into its process, and so

the tension, and (possibly) the pleasure, disappears. Where ideas are weaker, as in the lower animals, this seems to happen much less. And where we are active it happens seldom, for there usually to the last there is something which resists, and the last obstacle is often most vigorously attacked. Thus a port in view makes the idea of wreck doubly painful, and adds to our striving unless the sight of danger disappears. What is called the effort of despair comes on the other hand mainly from the pain and the extraordinary excitement which its tension has generated; the pleasant idea of escape must of course be an element, but the whole state is clearly painful, and pain the chief mover.

Turning now from the inquiry, What *moves* in desire?, let us once more inquire, What is the *object* desired? That the object is always pleasure we have seen is a mistake, and it would be another mistake to introduce muscular activity into its essence. Indeed even in some sensuous desire, as for warmth, there may be no essential relation of the object to our muscles. Nor can I see any good reason to doubt that a creature might have desire even though it possessed no self-movement. But, passing by these prejudices, let us raise another question. What is desired seems to be always the realization of our idea; and it has been argued that this reality must be a reality for us. But that, it is further urged, must be our state of mind. If so, what is desired will be a presentation to ourselves.<sup>1</sup> But this is clearly not the case. We may desire what we know it is impossible we should see, as the fortune of our descendants and a good use of our legacies. And to call this an illusion, and to argue that our desire is here really for certitude, or else for the impossible, would be to me a mere paradox. 'Oh! to know he is safe!' implies a wish for his safety, and we want the knowledge of that usually as something *per accidens*. Desire of course cannot be satisfied unless the idea is both realized and realized for me. But the idea, the *content* of the desired, as distinct from the psychical state of desire, need not include any kind of

<sup>1</sup> Drobisch, p. 220; Volkmann, ii. 397; Lipps, *Grundtatsachen*, &c., p. 610.

relation to me. That relation must exist in my actual satisfaction, and my desire can, therefore, in some cases, never be followed by satisfaction. But I fail to see how that shows that the object of my desire must be other than I think it, or why, in general, desire *must* imply a possible satisfaction. Again, I have of course a natural tendency to imagine myself there where I know that I cannot be. But this tendency is very far from always qualifying the object of desire.

I will now glance briefly at a point far too negligently handled. What is the nature of *aversion*? First the object of aversion, like the object of desire, is always an idea. We may indeed *seem* to desire the sensations that we have, but our object is really their continuance or their increase, and these are ideas. And so it is with aversion.<sup>1</sup> The mere incoming of the painful is not aversion, nor is even the fear of it, if fear is confined to mere contraction or again to aimless shrinking back. To me aversion seems positive, what we call 'active dislike'. It implies a desire for negation, for avoidance or destruction. And hence its object, to speak strictly, cannot be reality, since it implies negation, and that is an idea. But desire for negation is still not aversion, until painfulness is added. The object to be negated must be felt to be painful and may also be so thought of. Aversion then is the desire for the negation of something painful. It is not a negative kind of desire over against a positive kind, and I myself could attach no meaning to a negative desire. Aversion is positive, but its true object is the negation of that which is commonly called its object—a confusion which has arisen from taking dislike to be mere negative liking. Aversion has a positive character, or it would not be desire; but its positive side is variable. There may be a definite position whose maintenance we want, as when we are averse to the injury of something

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sully, *Psych.*, 582, should not have spoken of 'the assertion of Waitz that aversion involves a belief in the reality of the pain'. What Waitz says is that its object must be thought probable and *expected*, a very different view. Even this, however, is contrary to fact. All that is true in it is, that, where we can, we suppress groundless fears because their nature is essentially painful, while that of our desires is not so.



we love; or again, the positive may be left blank—something, anything, is what we want if it will serve to rid us of the painful. But again we may positively desire the act of destruction, with the agencies of its process, and so depend for the pleasures of life on our aversions. I hope this brief sketch may throw light on an obscure corner of our subject, and I will, in passing, advert to another mistake. Desire and aversion have been taken to be aspects of desire, since that is tension,<sup>1</sup> and (we may add) is to that extent painful. This is mere confusion, for all aversion has an ideal object. Now the (painful) tension of desire is not an object at all. It may be made one, and so may give rise to an aversion. But this will clearly *not* be an aspect of the original desire, but will be a new desire supervening. I may remark further that (as was the case with desire) the *object* of aversion (as distinct from the *state*) need not contain any sort of reference to the self. It is no illusion by which I am now averse to the ruin of my country after my death.

The subject of desire offers other interesting questions, but I must go on to *volition*, and will do so by the discussion of a necessary problem. How far is an *idea* required for desire? It may be truly objected that, if idea is to mean image, then, when desire is directed on an object of sense, there need be no image, distinct from that, present to the mind and, if so, no idea. But my reply is that idea is no more equivalent to image than it is to sensation. With me the opposition here is not between external sensation and internal image, for both of these are mere psychical facts. The difference between them is doubtless psychologically important and also interesting, and it would be a pleasure to me elsewhere to discuss its difficulties. But here it is irrelevant. Sensation and image are psychical facts of different kinds, still they are mere facts. Their content is not alienated from and indifferent to their existence. But an idea is any part of the content of a fact so far as that works beyond its existence. It does not work apart from, but it works more or less independently of, its starting-place. It is of course a psychical event, but that side of it is

<sup>1</sup> Volkman, §140; Lipps, p. 604.

accidental. It is what later becomes a *meaning*. And for this reason we may have an image without an idea, and again an idea without any image, since a sensation may supply us with a content used beyond the sensation. Now the result of the idea's working need not be separated from its basis, as when I see a man, and through association then see him as an Englishman, and do this without any image. Here what we say is 'called up' (and which is *not* an image) may be said to coalesce with, and to be modified by, the starting-point.<sup>1</sup> But again the element brought in may be discrepant with the presentation, as when the sight of a fruit gives me feelings of taste, which cannot, while that is out of my mouth, be identified with it. The result here may be an image, a psychical fact known not to be in outward existence. But there is an intermediate state where the presented is qualified ideally so as to collide with itself, and where this discrepant content is desired without being a separate image. A common instance of this would be desire for (the continuance of) a feeling which exists. And it was when sensation had been overpowered by its idealized self, that desire, as we saw, almost ceased before the moment of possession. This again is how we can have a desire without knowledge, a dim desire with no clear object—as in the usual example of the sexual impulse. It is not that we have *no* idea, for, if so, our state would be something lower than desire. But the idea is a common element, a something in a number of psychical states, which pleases and is not in harmony with these states as they are, and its increase is felt to lead us beyond, we know not where. We desire the presented, but we desire it with an ideal qualification. We need have no image, and yet even here we want to realize an idea.

To take idea merely as existing psychical fact is everywhere to be driven into a deadlock or a fiction. For instance, desire, we all know, may be for internal fact; we may want, e.g., the existence of an idea. But, if so, we

<sup>1</sup> This is only a mode of statement and is really incorrect. Since in the present case nothing comes into existence in separation from the starting-place, there can be no coalescence or modification proper.

must have the idea of an idea. Upon this, James Mill, a man whose courage rose higher as facts grew more opposite, presents us with a dilemma. The idea is there *or* it is not there (*Analysis*, ii. 358). No, we reply, when we desire, it must be there *and* yet not there. We must have a psychical fact containing features out of harmony with its existence and pointing beyond. Suppose I desire to go through a proposition in Euclid. I have a psychical fact which contains both the general character of this process, sufficiently for recognition, and also the feature of the existence of the process as my psychical fact—and this is not in harmony with what I have. No doubt to say what the basis of an idea is may be very difficult indeed, and I am not discussing that (*E.* vi. 146, x. 190). What I must insist on is that, when we desire, we have already what we want in recognizable character; and, if an idea is an image, this leads to difficulties which, in my knowledge, have never been met. Suppose that we are trying to remember, for example, a name, what is there in our mind? This question was forced on his editors by James Mill, but the answer is unsatisfactory. 'We have some collateral or something to determine our search for it', is Professor Bain's answer (*Analysis*, ii. 358). If we had a mere collateral, I reply, that is not the idea of another collateral at all; nor again, if it were, should we desire this particular one, for the mere collateral would be satisfied by anything else which turned out to be collateral. And if Professor Bain means more than this, will his theory account for it? 'We will to remember the Greek name of the god, called by the Romans, Bacchus. We have in mind the name Bacchus, and the knowledge that the Greeks had a different name for the god' (*Analysis*, ii. 359). Yes, but the idea of a name qualified by the general feature of belonging to a god with a certain character—how is this going (apart from the grossest of fictions) to be translated into the existence of mere psychical images?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And what is the image of 'a blank in our present ideas'? J. S. Mill has tried (*Analysis*, i. 99) to answer the question: What is the idea of the absence of anything? And his failure is again instructive here.

The importance of this point in regard to Volition compels me to refer to another mistake. I cannot admit that mere completeness, and the filling out of detail, is the essential distinction of the real from the desired. It is usually a concomitant, but it may be absent. The main feature which is desired is existence within the context of the outer or inner world of presentation—and the detail certainly *need* not be greater on the whole, though there is commonly some new feature which is also compulsory. If I am looking for the solution of a complicated intrigue, when I first see this, it need not be richer than what I previously possessed, except in one feature, and on the whole it may be poorer. And suppose I long to see if my horse is at night in the field, I may have an image far more special than the dim form I can make out. But my desire is satisfied if the bare essentials are perceived within the context of the given outward space. Particularization of an idea's content is in some cases what I desire, and its existence even in psychical fact is here to some extent accidental (*E. vi.* 146). But this is far from being the case everywhere.

## III

From this point we may pass straight to the essence of Volition. It is will when an idea produces its existence. A feature in present existence, not in harmony with that and working apart from it, gives itself another existence in which it is realized and where it is both idea and fact. And will is not a faculty or a separate kind of phenomenon. It is merely one special result of general laws and conditions,<sup>1</sup> the main law of Individuation with its branches, Blending and Contiguity (Redintegration). If an idea works itself out ideally and subject to identity—the process is thought. If, on the other hand, it produces fact in which its character and existence are no longer discrepant, the process is will. And the other kinds of phenomena could be easily shown to arise from other workings of the same laws and elements. But here, confining myself to

<sup>1</sup> Both here and in what follows, I suppose the reader to be acquainted with my articles in *Mind* [= *E.* x and xii].

volition, I will first state broadly the main principle, then defend it against objections, and add at the end a modification. We shall see the essence most easily if we begin with *internal* will. Now mere thought need not be will in any proper sense of that term. If I begin with an idea, and its logical consequences develop themselves in my mind, it is true that this process is a series of new facts, and we may say, if we please, that these events are produced by the activity of thinking. But still the process is not will, because the result is not the existence of the original idea and, throughout the process, the side of fact is merely accidental. Suppose, e.g., first, that my wandering thoughts come on one of Euclid's theorems and that they are led to trace the argument; and suppose, secondly, that in addition I have at the beginning the idea of going through the argument;—the second of these cases is volition, while the first is not. For in the second we have a general idea of the proposition over against a psychical state with which at present it collides, and then we have in the result a process where the existence is the existence of, and proceeding from, this idea. But in the first case, there being no idea of the result, the result does not give to the idea existence. Or take the will to recollect—here I have first an idea of the thing wanted, but not its existence (what exists is discrepant with the content required), then the result gives me psychical fact containing my idea. But if, without being required, the thing, as we say, had come up, the result would still be a fact containing an idea, but this idea would not be one that has gone before and has gone on to produce its own existence, and therefore it would not be will. Thought must alter the phenomenal sequence, no doubt, but so also does mere emotion and again sensation. The question is whether this sequence has an ideal character, which, going before, has thus made its own existence in fact. And where this is not the case, the process is not will. Thought is not will except so far as there has been a will to think. But if we go on to ask *how* an idea can produce its own existence, the answer is—by Contiguity and also by Blending. By the first the end

suggests the means, and by the second it reinforces whatever in psychical fact is already its own existence. I will not dwell upon this point, but pass on further to difficulties.

When we go on to volition where the end is not a thought but an outward event, there it may be said that our view comes to shipwreck at once. For there a bodily state is (or is implied in) the existence of the idea, and to make a bodily state we require a new agency. But I do not think so; I think we require merely the recognition that Association extends to the bodily side of mental states; and I assuredly could not call such an agency new, or anything but what I at least have always presupposed. I cannot even attempt here to lay down accurately the relation in which body and mind stand to each other, but shall assume that every psychical state has two aspects, and that these aspects once conjoined may reintegrate each the other. I am aware of the view that looks on mind as a bare effect, or at the most as a mere dependent concomitant. And I am aware of the view which denies wholly the interference of body with mind, or even goes on everywhere to make the 'cause' a mere occasion upon which something else supervenes. And, considered as deductions from metaphysics, these views might be respectable—though the first of them (as we find it) comes usually from the coarsest and most ignorant dogmatism. But I decline to enter such an atmosphere. To demonstrate the influence either of body on mind or of mind on body is obviously impossible; but there is evidence enough for each, and no more for one than for the other, and I am going to assume that this is so. But I do *not* suppose that bare mind ever works upon bare body. I assume that in a psychical state, which has both sides, the mental side may be the chief determining condition of a bodily result, and I cannot undertake here to define this further. Now, on this assumption, when we pass from internal to external volition, no new principle will come in. The one principle that we require is that Association in its working should not be limited to bare mind. And since it has been clearly understood that the laws of psychology do not pretend to be

ultimate and absolute truths, I see no ground for hesitation. The law will be that, if a state of body  $A^1$  and a state of mind  $B^1$  have occurred together, any one state with the quality of A or B (call it  $A^2$  or  $B^2$ ) will tend to bring in the other. How this law is to be interpreted, if we press for final truth, I refuse here to discuss.

I will deal now with volition directed externally, and shall at first keep to cases not dependent upon the so-called 'voluntary' muscles. The reader must understand that I am saying nothing about the *origin* of the will,<sup>1</sup> but am aiming at its essence. And that its essence is not to be found unless in connexion with these 'voluntary' muscles seems to me a mere prejudice. An idea of a state of my salivary glands or sexual organs will produce its existence in fact. We hear of those who can blush, shiver, sweat, or shed tears (Lotze, *Med. Psych.*, p. 303), if their mind is set on it. And if we think of various sensations in parts of our bodies, we can produce them at will, and can induce at our pleasure other bodily alterations through emotional excitement. Now on the one hand, I believe, the view could not be sustained that our striped or voluntary muscles are here the necessary agents; and on the other hand to deny that these changes are volitional would be to confess oneself refuted. With the nature of the process, considered physiologically, I am not concerned; but, as will, it is merely a case of our law. Where we have had a bodily state  $A^1$  with a psychical state  $B^1$ , then, when  $B^2$  comes in,  $A^2$  tends to appear; and, if an idea of A is what produces the result, that result is volition. Blending too will supplement Contiguity; not that psychical and physical can be said to blend, but, where we have a local sensation of any kind whatever, there the idea of local change will assimilate itself with the sensation through their common basis, and, by strengthening that basis, will increase the bodily result. And, when we pass from these states to alterations produced through our voluntary muscles, the main principle is the same; and, abstracting as before from the question of origin, we can state it at once. Whenever

<sup>1</sup> On this difficult question see Sully, *Psych.*, pp. 593 ff.

any kind of mental state has been associated with a condition of our muscles, that state tends to reproduce that condition, and (as before) Blending may assist. Hence an idea of muscular movement, or of some end which implies it, will, given the proper associations, produce its own existence; and this without the invocation of any faculty such as Activity or Attention. With the physiological machinery I am not concerned, except to say that I should welcome with humble thankfulness any kind of finding from a jury of physiologists, if it confined itself to physiology.

This is the essence of volition, and, before I proceed to add a needful proviso, I will explain it further by considering some hostile doctrines. Professor Bain, who perhaps has thrown more light on the Will than any other psychologist, would, I presume, reject the conclusion I have adopted. As to the connexion of the will with the 'voluntary' muscles Professor Bain's doctrine is not clear to me, either on the side of body or of mind, and I will therefore not attempt to criticize it. And, where I feel that it is impossible for me to pass on in silence, my state is still one of a respectful inability to comprehend. What Professor Bain seems to teach is that the will must be selfish, and that, for all that, disinterested actions exist. Such actions do exist, but, as I understand it, are not volitions, but proceed from the intellect. When a mother deliberately sacrifices her life, the good old fashion was to call this an illusion, by which the mother aimed at her own pleasure and hit something else. From this Professor Bain dissents, and he holds the act to be unselfish. It is a disinterested action, but it is not will; on the contrary it is irrational, and comes from the intellect. And to the objection that the act is most palpably a volition, the reply, I suppose, is that, if this were the case, the will might be unselfish, which is not possible. But this strange confinement of volition to self-seeking action, so far from appearing axiomatic, and a thing the opposite of which can call for no discussion, strikes my mind as in obvious conflict with fact. Indeed, I should have ventured to consider it the plain refutation of any principle from which it comes.



And, since I certainly cannot attribute this to Professor Bain, and as certainly cannot find what else I should attribute, I must leave the matter as it stands with an expression of regret.

But, to pass on to another problem, it may be objected that desire is essential to volition, and that, unless the idea is felt pleasant, though it works, we have no will. This objection is defensible, and it was long before I ceased to consider it valid. But if we take acts from 'fixed ideas', from mere suggestion, from imitation and obedience to the word of command—not to add hypnotic phenomena—I cannot see that desire is always present in volition. If an act is suggested or ordered, and I do it, as we say, without thinking, it is a paradox to deny this in every case to be will; and the presence of desire is, by me at least, often not discoverable. Nay, on the contrary, the idea of the action may be painful.<sup>1</sup> We can indeed argue that, there being a general desire to act or an uneasiness during inaction, the idea of acting must be pleasant, or again that, by setting up a tension and then suggesting relief, the idea becomes pleasant. This is legitimate, but quite insufficient to prove desire in every case. In the first place, a tension and a readiness to act certainly need not be present before the idea comes; nor, when it comes, need the idea first be felt to be pleasant before it can move; and, again, if the idea *makes* the tension and so becomes pleasant by suggested relief, then the idea is acting already apart from its pleasantness, and we are trying to explain the cause by its effect. Nor, where tension is set up, does the idea always become pleasant at all. Further it is not true that in all cases a tension exists. In a sudden act not only may we fail to be aware of it, but there seems to be no interval long enough for its origin. We can, of course, postulate that which we fail to observe, but why should we do so? Why should the idea working itself out *not* be a volition? If we deny this, we should stand on something better than a

<sup>1</sup> I would remark here that, if we intend to make means and end essential to volition, we need to lay down that doctrine with more limitation than is usual.

mere preconception as to the necessity in all cases of pleasure and pain.<sup>1</sup>

Let us go on to consider other possible objections. An idea, we may be told, is not in all cases required, since the act may proceed direct from a perception. But I answer first that, if the perception is qualified ideally (as we explained on desire), and then produces the existence of that qualification, this is the working of an idea; and secondly, where this fails, the action is not will, and I think no one apart from theory would dream of so calling it. And with this reply we may pass on to more serious questions. It may be objected that our account is not too narrow but too wide. If an idea realizing itself is will, then the result of expectation, being a realized idea, will come from volition. But not so, I reply, if the result is produced, *not* by the action of the idea, but by quite other agencies. If the idea is realized by something else, it does not realize itself. And this leads us to consider a point of importance. In the result of the idea, whether external or internal, there are always circumstances which fall outside the idea's content. Where these are usual and normal, they are held to come from the idea and themselves to have been willed. But where in the result elements appear which are not normally connected with the idea's realization, and again where the normal result of the idea is interfered with from outside, we have not got will. There is, of course, very great uncertainty as to the detail of this principle; and as to the features which, for this or that subject, are and are not normally connected with the idea, there is also confusion. But I am here simply concerned with the *psychological* principle. I will illustrate briefly. If I resolve to think out a problem, do I will everything which turns out to be required for its solution? And so again with the external. When I kill trying to cure, has the result been willed? We should say that any excess beyond what I believed normally connected with the idea is not my will at all. Suppose,

<sup>1</sup> The attitude of both Mr. Sully and Mr. Ward is to me somewhat puzzling here. They seem to consider the question scarcely worth discussing; but I cannot understand why.

on the other hand, I were thinking of a result, say the finding the amount of an unrighteous gain, and without any operation I got the answer required; or say that I wished to steal a jewel and then found it in my hand. In these cases we should deny the existence of volition, because the normal working of the idea, however intense, could not have so brought out its reality. Part at least of that reality is referred, not to the idea, but to something else of some kind. And, though the limit and the detail are certainly vague, I think this principle is certain, and I will carry it on further. Suppose the memory of the disgusting causes us to vomit, suppose we blush because we think we may, or yawn, or itch, if the ideas of these are suggested—are we to call this volition? I think the answer will confirm the principle we laid down. If the connexion between the idea and the result is thought such that the idea was held with the expectation of its reality following, then, unless something happened abnormally, we should call that volition. Because I am able to yawn at pleasure, if I entertain the idea and so yawn, then I have willed it, unless I can show interfering conditions. But I cannot blush at will because the idea does not produce the reality, unless indeed by going round through emotion, upon which I, personally, cannot count. Hence my blushing is accidental in regard to the idea, though that idea really was a condition which acted.

But this, of course, leads us on into still greater difficulties. Take a case where the idea produces its reality, but where we say that the idea is forced on us and not resistible. We need not go to hypnotism for examples, for these, so far as I know, are only one kind among others of the action of ideas.<sup>1</sup> A morbid idea becomes dominant, and perhaps recurrent at intervals,<sup>2</sup> and produces an action. Is this volition? A painful suggestion, to which we are averse, by

<sup>1</sup> The idea that psychology is to be revolutionized by experiments in hypnotism could hardly have been entertained by any educated psychologist. But it is easy to startle the vulgar with the pathology of a science. To learn its principles is another thing.

<sup>2</sup> See Knop, *Paradoxie des Willens*, for examples.

its mere strength and persistence carries us away. We fear to fail because fear unsteadies us; we fear to fail because of fear, and that anxiety produces the object of its aversion. This is not will, and yet the idea seems to make its own reality. Nor would it avail us to attempt to fall back upon desire and to make that the criterion; for, even where we desire, we do not call it will if the result seems abnormal, as when above I desired a conclusion without the operation. Desire shows will only if we desire what is under our control; and, if it is under our control, we should call it volition even if desire were absent. And in all these cases, I presume, our control is the criterion. If the idea is not controllable, we refer it to the outside and deny our own volition. If I could not help it, I did not will it.

But can we give a definite meaning to our inability to help? I am not asking as to our moral responsibility in general, nor as to the particular limits and detail of our control. I am asking simply for the principle on which we call, or refuse to call, our actions volition. We saw that will was an idea producing its own reality; but we saw also that the connexion may be merely apparent. The result may show an element forced out or thrust in by something abnormal, and which therefore we hold external to the process of the idea. And since the idea does *not* here produce *its own* reality, these actions fall outside our definition of will. But we have to deal now with cases where the strength of the idea is said to prevent volition. We seem here to go upon the principle that an idea has a normal, absolute or relative, strength, and that anything beyond may therefore be referred to something external to our wills. And at first this degree of strength seems purely arbitrary; but it is, I think, not wholly so. A criterion seems to be found in the presence of an opposite idea. If I have an impulse and the idea of resistance is not present, the action is will, unless we save ourselves by the further (unexplained) assertion that resistance *would* have been present if the conditions had been normal. But, given the presence of a resisting idea, then I think we should

disown the result of the impulse. For, if that impulse had been normal, we feel a counter-idea would have restrained it, and therefore its strength and its result may be looked on as foreign. And where the result is desired, the same tendency may still be noticed, and extreme force in the idea may be referred to the supernatural.<sup>1</sup> I think this aspect of self-control is one reason why the will has been (falsely) confined to the 'voluntary' muscles. The connexion of the idea with the result is there both far more direct and more regular, but this is not quite all. The opposing muscles give us a power of resistance and control, because they supply us with an idea which works wholly counter to the first. Apart from these muscles the simple definite counter-ideas fail, and control is more difficult. We cannot banish an idea by the mere general idea of its expulsion, and the special banishing element is often hard, or even impossible, to find.

Hence the conclusion I would urge is not that popular usage is quite consistent with our definition of will, but I would insist that, where it is not so, it is also quite inconsistent with itself. And, I think, through all its inconsistency it clings unconsciously to the principle that, where an idea realizes its own content, we have the essence of volition.

I am compelled to add, before closing, a few words on the feeling of Activity. I may be told that this belongs to (if it does not constitute) the essence of will, and is at all events a criterion of the presence of volition. Now, if this means that in all cases by applying that criterion we are delivered from doubt as to the presence of will, it is obviously false. For it is no easier to answer the question 'Was I active?' than the question 'Did I will?' But, dismissing this, let us ask if a feeling of activity is essential. On this I should like to say, first, that we may experience this feeling where will is not clearly present, and where the self-expansion does not seem to be produced by an idea of

<sup>1</sup> I am keeping here to formal considerations. The material want of correspondence in the idea to our character would be of course another important reason for accounting it foreign.

the result. In such cases the question arises how far an idea must always in some sense be presupposed; but I must pass this by. I will here (for the sake of argument) admit (what I do not hold) that with the feeling of activity we must have will, just as with will we have a felt activity; but the question will be as to the nature of their connexion. For me the feeling of activity will be merely a result, or at most a concomitant symptom. Wherever we have self-expansion attributed merely to self, there we feel ourselves active; and where an idea causes its own existence, there, normally, we have felt self-expansion. And it is not true that the presence or absence of this feeling is always the cause why we own or disown the idea. It is often true that the independent impression of foreignness is what makes this feeling fail. Normally any idea which realizes itself expands my self as a consequence,<sup>1</sup> and, because mine, will produce the feeling of activity. And where the idea is felt to be foreign through its material want of agreement with my self, there the contraction of the self and the failure of my activity is not a cause but a concomitant effect of the foreignness. Finally, where the working idea

<sup>1</sup> That is, of course, expands it *so far*. If, e.g., I will to narrow my psychical field, and succeed, that is still so far self-expansion, and since the idea is felt to be mine, I am aware of activity. I will repeat here, however uselessly, that in my opinion *mere* expansion of self can *not* give activity. Of course, therefore, some expansions of self may be passive; and indeed some are so. Of course, again, some may be painful. Of course, once more, even where the expansion is attributed to the self, the whole mixed result may be painful, though even here the element of successful activity is always pleasant. A difficulty may seem to arise when (unsuccessful) effort appears to give activity without expansion. But in such effort there will be unsteadiness and oscillation and the beginnings of that which, if it went further, would become complete success. 'This so far will be expansion, and without this, and if all were stationary, I am convinced that we should have no feeling of activity, nor indeed of effort. And I suppose that it may be my duty to state that I have made the distinction between activity of the soul 'for the soul' and 'for the outside observer' (*E.* xii. 226), and have even expended italics to mark the fact that I have done so. On this whole question I fully admit that the view which I have adopted requires further working out. On the other hand I am as sure of its general truth, as I am convinced that no one will understand it who approaches it from a basis of hardened pre-conception.

appears for other reasons external, or its results to be in any way due to outer interference, there the absence of the feeling of activity is caused by the independent perception, or again, partly and in some cases, is a joint effect with it. Throughout psychology we may feel sure that a consciousness of activity is a thing to be explained and not a thing to explain by. And with these hurried remarks I must bring this subject to an end.

But in conclusion I am forced to say something on the *normative* character of the will, and shall allow myself here on some points to travel outside psychology. Just as with thought we saw the law of movement become self-conscious and an end (*E.* xii. 229-30), so it is with volition. The end of both is Individuality, self-realization as the unity of harmony and expansion; but for will this end must seek existence in the series of events. My end is to realize this perfection in my psychical being, yet not in mine looked at by itself, but regarded as an element in a higher system. And, as with thought harmony and expansion fell under one head (*ibid.* 208, 236-7), so it is again with will. If positive self-realization is the end and is essential, that end, given plurality, becomes negative of discord. It means a harmonious individuality that, because it finds opposition, is forced to expand. This end is not quantitative in itself; but, since perfection can never be reached by us wholly and yet is approached in various degrees, morality becomes approximative—though, if the end were attained, there would be no more quantity. And, since thus there is a scale of higher and lower, these aspects of harmony and expansion may diverge, and their seeming discrepancy may give rise to difficulties. For one life may be wider and another more harmonious. An end may bring greater loss to, or of, individual beings, while at the same time it seems to realize a higher system. Hence in a given case it may be hard to distinguish higher and lower. We have the same difficulty with knowledge. That may concentrate itself into a general view, or may scatter itself into details, and it is often hard to discover which movement best

deserves the epithet of progress. We assume usually that differentiation, whether in science or in life, will not lead mainly to distraction, but will result sooner or later in a higher unity. But where this assumption is not well founded (or at least seems hard to justify), a real difficulty arises.

If we turn now to pleasure and pain, and the relation they bear to the End and Standard, we may be asked if it is possible to justify their exclusion. But certainly they are not excluded. I do not suppose that facts exist, or ought to exist, merely in order to realize a form, or generally for the sake of any abstraction. When we say that our end is to realize a principle, we mean that the reality of that principle is our end. But this again should mean the existence of fact having the character of our principle. It ought not to imply that the reality has another character, which is connected with the end merely *per accidens* and externally. This, it appears to me, is an assumption which would go beyond what we know. And thus, if pleasure is the feeling of positive self-affirmation, and pain again of discord, these feelings most obviously cannot be excluded from the idea of realized Individuality. To say that without pleasure the end would still be the end, is to transcend our knowledge; as it is even to assert that with a different sensible character the end would still be desirable. So far as I see, every one of its aspects goes (or may go) in reality to make the end what it is; and I do not object to use the existence of pleasure and pain as means to know about its realization.

But, if so, we must deal with the objection that the end has characters which may diverge. It seems as if, to progress towards a higher individuality, we might be forced to increase pain and to sacrifice pleasure. But I cannot accept this possibility. We must bear in mind that, as we saw above with harmony and expansion, the sacrifice of one aspect may simply be relative, may be temporary and local. And, secondly, I feel sure that on some points we should reconsider common views as to progress. A one-sided, distracted life, even if distraction proceeds from advance of the intellect, is not really higher than what,



taken intellectually, may be beneath it, and may perhaps be destroyed by it in the struggle of life. And I think that the habit we have got into of believing the opposite has come partly from the assumption (rational or otherwise) that such a distraction is but relative, and must really be a means to some higher unity. And further, when measuring high and low by the test of self-dependence and individuality, we are too likely to fall into blind individualism. The psychical creature is not one thing actual by itself, nor is its spiritual relation to a higher individuality another thing that falls (I know not where) outside its being. Duped by such prejudices, we may set that down as poor which in truth is most rich. And I think that, if the reader will take these points into consideration, he may hesitate to say that development of individuality can bring greater pain. For myself, if that were shown to be possible, I should admit it as a difficulty which I was unable to solve.

Nor, further, will the implication of pleasure bring quantity into the end. Perfection will imply pleasure and the absence of pain; and we may add (I presume) that pain neutralized by pleasure, so as on the whole to lose its character, is not to count as pain. 'To make the end to be realized consist in increase of pleasure, or in an infinite sum or series, or in anything else which would exclude absolutely the possibility of its own reality—may be left to those who are metaphysically incompetent. 'To hold that of two pure pleasures one cannot be better than the other may seem at first sight paradoxical, but it is another side of the truth that a harmonious individual would be perfect and could not be more perfect. And, just as the end apart from pleasure becomes approximative, so, when pleasure is included, the end becomes neither more nor less approximative, to those who understand. My space does not allow a fuller explanation.

I will add merely that our conclusion has not led us to Hedonism. Hedonism I understand to abstract pleasure and pain from life, and to make of everything else a mere external means to the getting of one and the avoiding of the other. Hedonism holds, in short, that every other

aspect of the world is absolutely worthless. Now I can say (speaking broadly) that what is not pleasant is worthless, but I cannot add that it is worthless merely because it is not pleasant, and that the same thing (mere pleasure added) would, simply for that reason, once more be valuable. I dissent wholly from such a one-sided abstraction; and that the universe, or our life, exists for the sake of one of its elements seems to me most indefensible. I at least know no rational way of arriving at the worthlessness of any single aspect of the world. This is the main point, and I must venture to doubt whether any one can agree with us here while still remaining a Hedonist in principle. Our Hedonism has, however, begun to purge itself of a mass of inherited errors. Its barbarous psychology of motive seems now quite optional. And its attachment to the reality of the mere individual and to the ultimate value of his private claims—a dogma neither based on nor assailable by reason—has begun to be challenged. How much Mr. Stephen has done for our moral philosophy, by breaking away here from the highest authorities, has, I think, hardly yet been appreciated. He should have gone far towards making it possible for those who disagree to argue.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> How far in what precedes I may have changed the position which I took up ten years ago, I have not thought it necessary to inquire. The divergence would be found, I think, on the whole to be inconsiderable. But I have not ventured to suppose this a question likely to interest.

## XV

### ON PROFESSOR JAMES'S DOCTRINE OF SIMPLE RESEMBLANCE (I)

[First published in *MIND*, N.S. II, No. 5, 83-8. January, 1893.]

IN Professor James's *Psychology* (vol. i, p. 532) there is a doctrine and an argument with regard to simple Resemblance. Both the argument and the doctrine, I venture to think, are open to criticism, and perhaps some discussion on this point may prove of value. I would much rather express my general admiration for Professor James's brilliant work. And since the argument, if not the doctrine, is derived from Professor Stumpf, I am sorry again to criticize a writer whose book on Space, years ago, taught me much. I have thought it better to confine myself to Professor James's statement.

There is such a thing, he holds, as simple Resemblance.

'Any theory which would base likeness on identity, and not rather identity on likeness, must fail. It is supposed, perhaps by most people, that two resembling things owe their resemblance to their absolute identity in respect of some attribute or attributes, combined with the absolute non-identity of the rest of their being. This, which may be true of compound things, breaks down when we come to simple impressions.'

We seem bidden here to make a choice. We must either accept resemblance between what is simple, or we must hold

'that the difference between two objects is constituted of two things, viz., their absolute identity in certain respects, *plus* their absolute non-identity in others.'

Now I wish to point out at once that this alternative seems incomplete. A man may be sure that resemblance between what is quite simple is quite unmeaning; and yet he need not believe that the one alternative to 'simple' is 'composite', if 'composite' means made up of separable parts. The view that sameness and difference are every-

where inseparable aspects most certainly exists. But its existence is not included in the dilemma in which the argument consists. And, in the second place, while holding resemblance, not indeed to *be*, but to be based always on, partial identity, one need not in consequence hold that this identity is explicit. If, that is, in things before my mind, which to me seem like, I do not distinguish, and perhaps could not specify, the identical point, this does not prove that no perceptible identity is there. But on these false assumptions Professor James's whole conclusion seems to rest.

The arguments employed make use of the instance of a series. Such an instance entails this very grave disadvantage. One cannot fully deal with its complication unless one attacks the general problem of the unity and order of a series. And to touch such a difficult question by the way is hardly possible. Certainly if Professor James's view of resemblance got rid of this problem, the inconvenience (he might fairly urge) lies all on one side. But this, I imagine, can hardly be said to be really the case. I must therefore warn the reader that the instances used in the arguments involve a serious and (so far as I see) an irrelevant complication. I am hence forced to treat merely that part of them which seems to me to be essential.

I. The first argument (I state it in my own way) is this. Take several sensible qualities which form a series. These qualities may have resemblance without identity. For, if identity, then an identical part; and if so, then a part which can be specified. In at least some cases one is unable to specify the part, and therefore, so far, there is no identity. Hence the resemblance is simple.

This argument appears to be thoroughly unsound. Resemblance I take, not to *be*, but to be an impression based upon, experienced partial identity. This, however, does not involve a perception of the identity, as such and discriminated. I may call things alike or different, and only afterwards discover the point which impressed my mind, and on which my judgement was founded. This is common experience, and, so far as it goes, is adverse to

the assumption that what I cannot distinctly indicate is therefore absent or ineffective. And then, again, some sensations seem to possess a common feature. They have, to me, a general character, of which I can be vaguely aware, though I cannot isolate it, or in any way (as we say) 'bring it out'. You cannot, e.g., point out what general colour is; but, on this ground, to deny that particular colours have for your perception anything in common appears not reasonable. 'Yes, but', I may hear, 'you have not considered the series. The colours are not more or less alike as being colours. They are more or less alike, for example, in being darker or lighter. Will you not deal with that point?' Well, I should have thought that darkness and lightness most assuredly were characters of which we are aware; and so, again, with bitter and sweet, and high and low, and dull and sharp, and (when you come to space) with up and down, or right and left. And to tell me that these characters in and for my mind do not exist, because I cannot make them explicit and distinct, appears quite arbitrary. And Professor James, it seems to me, is himself concerned in denying such a doctrine. For how can we have a consciousness of uniform direction (p. 490) if there is not some one element common to all the degrees? How are we to speak with any meaning of 'more' and 'less', if it is to be a 'more' and a 'less' of *nothing*? To choose the instance of a series, in order to disprove identity, was, I venture to think, indeed suicidal. You may perhaps urge that we have a series of resemblances, and that in this resemblance in the end consists the identity. But the resemblance, I reply, is not resemblance at large, or in general; for the series, we are agreed, has a particular direction. It moves to more or less of high or low, or soft or loud, or light or dark, or sweet or bitter. But a particular kind of resemblance, degrees of which make the unity of a series, seems to me to imply resemblance in and through a particular point. But, if so, with that we have a resemblance based on identity. Professor James has scarcely made it clear how he would deal with this obvious reply to the first argument. And I do not

think he has supplied any adequate information at all as to the unity of his series. How far this information is supposed to be given in Chapter xxviii I am unable to say.

II. The second argument I must quote in full, as translated from Stumpf.

'We may generalize:—Wherever a number of sensible impressions are apprehended *as a series*, there in the last instance must perceptions of simple likeness be found. *Proof*: Assume that all the terms of a series, e.g. the qualities of tone, *c d e f g*, have something in common—*no matter what it is*, call it *X*; then I say that the differing parts of each of these terms must not only be differently constituted in each, but must *themselves form a series*, whose existence is the ground for our apprehending the original terms in serial form. We thus get instead of the original series *a b c d e f . . .* the equivalent series *X $\alpha$ , X $\beta$ , X $\gamma$  . . . &c.* What is gained? The question immediately arises: How is a  *$\beta\gamma$*  known as a series? According to the theory, these elements must themselves be made up of a part common to all, and of parts differing in each, which latter parts form a new series, and so on *ad infinitum*, which is absurd' (p. 533, note).

This is the argument which I presume contains the abstract principle, and for myself I cannot call it 'conclusive' or even 'acute'. It is a dilemma based (if I understand it rightly) on a vicious alternative, and a dilemma certainly not reduced to its simplest form. I will endeavour to state its principle.

A thing is simple or else composite, and, if it is composite, its parts in separation retain each its own proper character. Resemblance, hence, if composite, is made of two parts, identity and difference, and these parts in separation, and taken bare, must still be identity and difference. Otherwise resemblance must be simple.

Now in certain cases of resemblance try to find the difference which is nothing but bare difference. You find only a difference which still contains some part of the identity. The attempt to get rid of this identity, and to bring out the difference bare and pure, can never succeed. And therefore difference is not separable, and therefore resemblance is not composite. And therefore it is simple, Q.E.D.

Now apply—if you think it worth while—this principle to the concrete instance of a series. If the steps of a series are not simple, you must be able in each case to separate the difference and the identity. And the differences themselves clearly must not have any serial character. For, if so, they would contain identity, and not be pure differences. They would be the series itself over again, and not the bare differences *of* the series. Thus in a series *ex hypothesi* the constitutive differences (if they exist) *must be* serial, for otherwise we are left with bare identity, and the series has vanished. But if, on the other hand, the differences *are* serial, still the series is gone, because its differences now do not exist. They are taken in connexion with and not apart from an identity; that is, they are not pure differences and so not differences at all. But the effort to find pure differences leads to the infinite regress and fails. Therefore the differences do not exist; and therefore the steps of the series (and I suppose the series itself) are simple. Therefore resemblance must be simple.<sup>1</sup> (Q.E.D.)

Now if the object were merely to disprove the view that resemblance consists of two 'parts', would it not be better simply to urge that identity and difference, if so taken apart, have each forfeited its character? That is the way of disproof which I should have thought was as plain as it is old. And then to argue from the proof that resemblance is not thus composite, direct to the conclusion that therefore resemblance is simple—is (I should have thought) to offer us an equally plain and familiar fallacy. Hence, probably I have not understood the argument which has gained Professor James's applause.

I am myself better acquainted with this dialectical way of reasoning when used to arrive at a very different result. I know it better when employed as a means to prove that

<sup>1</sup> I have here perhaps proved too much, but this may be all the better. So far as I see, a dialectical argument, the same as Professor Stumpf's, might be used to destroy Professor James's view of a series—if, that is, for him, in any sense, the perception of a series contains a common element and a diversity. As, however, I have no clear statement as to what Professor James understands by the unity of a series, I cannot offer a criticism which would have to be conjectural.

we have not separable parts, but inseparable aspects. But then it has not been picked up and applied for one particular end, but has been worked systematically and in all directions. Professor James would be invited, e.g., to exhibit a simplicity which was barely simple and not qualified, at all or in any way, by complexity. And then the same infinite process would be forthwith set up. But as this is all the common property of philosophical students, I must once more presume that I have not understood what, as I understand it, has no value. But I doubt if the fault can be entirely on my side. And with this we may perhaps pass from Professor Stumpf's dialectical argument.

At any rate, I may be told, in fact there *are* simple impressions, and these decide the case. What precisely they would prove and disprove, if they *were* anything real, would be a rather large inquiry. It would be a question certainly not confined to one special problem in psychology. But as this matter is (if I may say so) somewhat old ground with me, I may perhaps refer to what I wrote some years ago. I had been urging that association by Resemblance could be in all cases explained by Redintegration. And I then went on to say:—

'It may be objected, in the first place, that, if the sensation is simple, this theory will not work. I admit it, and I should be sorry if in such a case it *did* work. I would rather that any theory which I adopt did *not* explain impossibilities. And that any actual presentation should be simple is quite impossible. Even if it had no internal characters, yet it must be qualified by the relations of its environment. And this complexity would be quite enough for the purpose.'<sup>1</sup>

Simple impressions, in short, are mere abstractions, falsely taken to be facts. And I venture with great diffidence to add that this elsewhere seems to be the view held by Professor James himself. By simplicity he on other topics appears to mean a character which excludes not diversity, but only separability and partition. A whole in

<sup>1</sup> L. 332 = 307. I would venture to refer the reader to the rest of this discussion on Resemblance.



this sense would still be simple, however complex it might be, so long as it were integral, and contained inseparable diversities. But if so, Professor James's argument against identity bodily disappears. It holds as a disproof only of *one* untenable view of identity. And if so, obviously the further dilemma with its conclusion is vicious.

There is a view (Professor James must be well aware) which holds that identity and difference are complementary aspects, that the one aspect may be emphasized here, and the other aspect there, but that an attempt to isolate them leads everywhere to an infinite regress. And, of course, this view insists that identity and difference depend always upon content. They are both—to use Professor James's expression—'qualitative', or else nothing.<sup>1</sup> Now certainly a view may exist, and yet be so contemptible as to be treated fairly as non-existent. But then a man who holds that view is curious to know something of the ground for such contempt, at least in the case of a writer whom he has been led to respect. And therefore I turn for further information to Professor James:—

'The vanishing of all perceptible difference between two numerically distinct things makes them *qualitatively the same*, or *equal*. Equality, or *qualitative* (as distinguished from numerical) *identity*, is thus nothing but the *extreme degree of likeness*' (p. 532).

Well, but *of course* we want to know if likeness implies any difference—Yes or No—and again, further, if an *imperceptible* difference will do. We want to know this, because the extreme degree of likeness, if difference *is* necessary, will surely not be likeness at all. And if there is to be *no* difference—I wish Professor James would help me to answer the question, how things in that case can be distinct. Because suppose (as I cannot) that things distinct possess no other difference in quality, yet it seems to me that you must either qualify them by their relations or not.

<sup>1</sup> Identity can be taken *also*, in some cases, to involve continuity, but here qualitative sameness is, of course, still essential. Suppose it gone, and then see what identity is left. And mere continuity itself—does not that in the end imply an identity of content? Where otherwise lies the unity of temporal duration?

It must be Yes or No—which you please; but, so far as I can perceive, not both at once. If it is Yes, I can see no way to deny that the things are now *perceptibly* diverse. If it is No, I cannot understand, for the life of me, how *they* are now different at all—at least to human beings. In short, a distinction without any difference, and a series involving degrees, but degrees of nothing—are to me hopeless difficulties. If these things are plain to Professor James, I cannot believe it would be a misemployment of his powers to make them plain to us others—for I need not say that I am not alone in my unwilling blindness. And if I have fallen myself into some vicious dilemma, I have been waiting for years for some kind hand to help me out. But, if again a psychologist is not called on to vex himself with these idle problems, then perhaps also he need not entangle himself in dialectical subtleties which, if they are good at all, seem only good when one carries them through. But who am I that I should dare speak to Professor James of the dialectical method?

I should like to end this Note with two or three remarks. I would plead first that, if it has seemed unduly long, the issue involved is one of very great and wide-reaching importance. And next, with regard to the perception of a series, I would repeat that I have not attempted to explain this in passing. It is a problem in any case delicate and difficult, but, if we once discard identity, then I think much worse than difficult. Our one chance lies in maintaining the vital, the inseparable, connexion at every point between identity and difference.<sup>1</sup> But I certainly cannot end without another expression of my great and sincere admiration for Professor James's work. If it is not free (and how many books are free?) from lapses, those lapses leave its level something very much above the common.

<sup>1</sup> And suppose that we find that a certain perception is inexplicable and ultimate. Are we from this to conclude that it is therefore simple? If in what is ultimate we find diversity of aspect—where is the inconsistency?

## XVI

### ON PROFESSOR JAMES'S DOCTRINE OF SIMPLE RESEMBLANCE (II)

[*First published in MIND*, N.S. ii, No. 7, 366-9. *July*, 1893.]

I FEEL that some reply is due to Professor James's remarks in the last number of *Mind* [N.S. ii. 208], and I will begin by recalling the original issue. Professor James contended 'that any theory which would base likeness on identity, and not rather identity on likeness, must fail'. He argued not that there *might* be, but that there *must* be simple resemblance not resting on identity.

In proof of this thesis he adduced arguments which I endeavoured to meet. These arguments, as they were stated, are withdrawn, and Professor James now relies on a simpler form of one of them. He argues that identity not based on mere resemblance is untenable, because it leads to an infinite regress. And I will try to deal with this contention in its present shape.

The attempt is difficult for this reason, that, desiring to examine the proof adduced, I am unable to find any. The series of degrees, not degrees of anything at all, is no longer urged, and Professor Stumpf's subtleties are no longer before us. But I can discover nothing which is to stand in the place of these. There is an assertion that identity must lead to an indefinite regress. But the ground of this assertion seems not stated explicitly.

And hence in the main I have to repeat that a view of identity exists which, so far as I see, wrecks Professor James's thesis, and which, it seems to me, he throughout, and from first to last, ignores.

Identity and difference on this view are inseparable aspects of one complex whole. They are not even 'discernible', if this means that you can separate them in idea, so as to treat one as remaining itself when the other is excluded. And the whole is emphatically not a 'synthesis',

if that means that it can be mentally divided, and that its elements then still keep their characters. The 'Hegelian commonplace' suggested by Professor James (p. 210)<sup>1</sup> is therefore, to me at least (whatever Hegel would have said of it), in principle erroneous. It seems to contain the root of Professor James's own doctrine.

Let us take, for example, the different kinds of our sensations. In each kind I should say that there is something the same. Colours or smells differ among themselves, but there is a point in which, as coloured or as odorous, they are identical. But to call this or that colour a 'synthesis' would in my view be mistaken. For the uncoloured differences on one side, and their colour in general on the other side, are the products of false analysis and vicious abstraction. You may of course consider and attend to either the sameness or the differences in colour; but you must not use language which implies that either aspect, if not qualified by the other, is consistent even in thought. You cannot, in short, separate them even in idea; you can only lay stress for the moment on one side of an integral whole. It is as it would be at a far lower degree with, for instance, the inside and the outside of a sphere. Whichever of these you consider, you have also the other along with it. And to speak of their 'synthesis', as if they were Indian boxes one inside the other, would be in principle vicious.

And the view which I advocate is so far from seeming to me subtle, that I am prepared to hear that it is even trivial. But let us see how it applies. With colours and smells, and other kinds of experience, we have not reached the end; for these again are all alike and have something in common. They are all alike in being experienced or felt. Sentience, being, or experience (these are all the same to me) is a character in which everything is finally identical. And let us see if this doctrine is destroyed by Professor James's indefinite regress.

We hear that analysis, if we pursue identity, takes us to one of two conclusions, each untenable, and that therefore

<sup>1</sup> [References to Professor James's article will be found in *M.* n.s. ii.]

simple resemblance is true. Whether simple resemblance itself is tenable seems a question not directly faced. An attempt is made to prove that thesis indirectly by setting out and refuting all other possibilities. But I hardly see how it can be assumed that we *must* possess *some* tenable view. And in particular I cannot find that the above view of identity is recognized at all. But, if so, the proof is obviously unsound. I am ordered either to accept the 'Mind-dust theory'—a thing I venture to consider not worth the least notice—or else to affirm 'the postulation of point after point, encapsulated within each other *in infinitum*, as the constitutive condition of the resemblance of any two objects' (p. 208). But these alternatives surely do not include the view which I hold. To me it seems strange that colour should be encapsulated within colours and general sentience within sensations, and that my own life should be felt the same only because somewhere it has, or is, a box with something in it, and that otherwise my life is one because of one (?) simple immediate resemblance, resting, I suppose, on no constitutive condition whatever. But what to me is strange too is that any one, thinking so about Identity, should incline to banish it only at a certain point and not wholly and altogether.

And this idea of 'encapsulation' is, so far as I see, no mere metaphor. It seems the whole argument, and it contains the entire essence of Professor Stumpf's superfluous subtleties. The view which, if not refuted, ruins Professor James's thesis is this, that identity is always one aspect of an integral whole, and that if you abstract it, in the sense of ideally putting it in a box by itself, you have made it inconsistent with itself or reduced it to nothing. Experience or being is the last term in my regress, and is where I stop. And I am told that I am bound in reason to go back further still. And asking for a reason all I get is this. We have, say, *a, b, c, d*, all with one ultimate aspect *m*. And I am ordered to encapsulate *m* and then to see what happens. But I was taught what happens years ago when I learnt too imperfectly from a great master who saw into these matters perhaps as far as Professors Stumpf and

James. And I remember enough to recognize in this order to encapsulate the merest attempt to beg the whole question. And I say that I will neither take *m* as abstract being, and so make it nothing, nor will I take it as a 'synthesis', and so within it set up an infinite regress. I will take it rather as one aspect in vital connexion with another aspect, and, if this is absurd, I ask at least that some one will try to tell me why. For my part, since in experience identity and difference seem indissoluble and since otherwise the entire world of our knowledge seems dissipated, I will take them in this union, though certainly I cannot explain it. For I have always supposed that explanation must stop somewhere. And if any one urges against me such questions as how quality makes itself and how relations are engendered, I submit respectfully that all this is the merest irrelevancy.

So far as psychology is concerned, I have tried elsewhere to make my view clear. The question between Resemblance and Identity, I have urged, is there one of relative efficiency. I have protested and I do protest against attempting in psychology to judge of ultimate truth. If Resemblance *were* the ultimate truth I would not use it in psychology, because I am sure that there it works badly. And when I hear from Professor James that he cares about it as a thesis, that a little surprises me. For where, I ask, in psychology is this thesis to be *used*? Professor James, I thought, had broken with that insane mythology which Resemblance begets. I thought that the doctrine accepted from Professor Stumpf was a thing out of connexion with his actual work. But if he cares about it, then clearly I am somewhere mistaken.

Or is the thesis idle psychologically, and is it as a piece of ultimate metaphysical truth that Professor James contends for it? I wish, if so, that point had been clear; for, if so, from the first I could have been much shorter. The question is, I presume, the fundamental problem about the One and the Many. Can these features be held apart, and again is there any way of intelligibly taking them together? What opinions I have on this matter are in print

and ready to appear. But I will say at once that, in the full sense of the term 'intelligible', I do not think the union of these aspects of the world is intelligible. I think that in the end *each* (not merely one) shows inconsistency when apart, and that taken together they fail to satisfy the ultimate demands of our intellect.

But there is something else I think also. So far as the world or any part of it is to any degree intelligible, so far as there is any knowledge which to any extent goes beyond the barest feeling, this is the case solely because Identity, as I hold to it, is fact and truth. Deny this principle and the world, as we have it, is destroyed. And immediate Resemblance without identity seems to me, on the other hand, sheer nonsense. As a principle of knowledge it is useless and worse than useless, and in itself it is a mere heap of staring inconsistencies. And if I am invited here to a metaphysical discussion, I will make Professor James this offer. If he will state the principle on which he objects to identity (a thing which, let me remind him, he has not yet even attempted to do), I also will take the same principle, whatever it is. And I will show that, judged by it, Professor James's thesis as to Resemblance (p. 208) is indefensible. But I should add that I venture to provoke this conflict only because I feel sure that any appeal to principle would render it unnecessary. And if I am asked, Since all at the end may be unintelligible, why not at the beginning say, All is simple, and so have done with it?—I feel the force of that inquiry. But I would suggest in answer that not to trouble oneself at all might be even simpler.

If, however, we may remain on the firmer ground of psychology, I would end these remarks by stating how the case seems to stand. The contention against Identity was that at a certain point it breaks down and must give place to Resemblance without identity. So far as I have been able to understand this contention, I have tried to answer it. And the point I would urge is this. If in psychology such Resemblance is wanted, then (true or false) by all means let it be used in psychology. And if Professor James could show me that in his own admirable work he

has found it useful, that to me would be an argument of very great weight. And if by the help of it he could solve the problem of the perceived unity of a series, I would confess that these remarks have been largely mistaken. But if, in psychology at least, the principle will not work—if it merely lingers with the lingering survivals of the old Association mythology—why not banish it from psychology? Why, not let it reign, if it can, in the distracted realm of metaphysics?



## XVII

### ON PROFESSOR JAMES'S DOCTRINE OF SIMPLE RESEMBLANCE (III)

[*First published in MIND, N.S. ii, No. 8, 510. October, 1893.*]

I SHOULD be glad to accept Professor James's conclusion [*M. N.S. ii. 509*] that the question between us is about a word. But to me both Resemblance and Identity, as he advocates them, are mere self-contradictory ideas. Resemblance without identity, and again 'stark self-sameness' without difference, seem counterpart pieces of nonsense, nonsense unwarranted either in psychology or logic. And surely Professor James does deny Identity in the one sense in which I admit it. But with regard to Resemblance I would once more solicit attention to certain points.

Is Professor James prepared to maintain that, where the point of sameness is not explicit, it does not exist? Does he hold that in the end we have resemblance, though there is no point in which the things are alike and on which the resemblance is founded? Or, if not, will he explain why this point is not to be called one and the same? Does he teach that in a series you may have degrees of more and less which are more and less of nothing? Or, if not, will he tell us why this one something, of which there are degrees, is not to be called the same? And, when a series is perceived as one, is its unity to lie in resemblance without sameness? And, if so, may we be informed whether there is only one such resemblance or several? And, if there are several, where are we to hold that the unity lies? And, if there is but one such resemblance, will Professor James say how the serial differences in resemblance remain themselves, so long as through all there may not be any point of sameness? This last question cannot be troublesome to one who has understood and applauded Professor Stumpf's dialectical exploit. But if the objection is verbal and applies not to 'same' and 'sameness', but only to 'identity' and 'identical', may we have that stated?

It is easy to discredit such questions as idle conundrums asked in the interest of some obscure and foolish mysticism. It is easy to disregard them and to stand on inherited dogma. That is all so easy that in the present case I looked for something more interesting. But I leave it to the reader to judge whether these inquiries do not fall within psychology, and whether some answer to them should not be supplied by any satisfactory treatment of psychological principles. I am confident that Professor James, if he could be induced to deal with these problems, would not fail to throw light on them. He would certainly find that our difference involved much more than the mere meaning of a word.

## XVIII

### ON THE FAILURE OF MOVEMENT IN DREAM

[*First published in MIND, N.S. iii, No. 11, 373-7. July, 1894.*]

THERE is a question about dreams to which at present I have not found a good answer. Why, when we strive to move in dream, do we not always move? I am hardly parodying the average account when I represent it thus: In dream we do not move, and, when we do, it is called somnambulism. And, though many psychologists of course stand far above this average level, I have not seen a satisfactory discussion of the question. And I thought that some reader of *Mind* could perhaps direct me to such a treatment, or would himself perhaps throw some light on the matter. I will in the meantime venture to set down such ideas as I have acquired.

That we move in sleep is clear, and every one knows it who, for example, keeps a dog. And how far such movements may go, either without a dream or again with one, seems difficult to say. The nature of common somnambulism and its relation on one side to normal dream, and on the other side to hypnotism or again monomania, seems a problem certainly not solved. But my question here is a narrow one. When in dream we think of moving and desire to move, why *usually* do we not move? The fact, I believe, is thus, and it calls for some explanation. And though I can adduce two reasons for this fact, I doubt if they are sufficient.

(1) We may give as a reason, first, the comparative weakness of psychical states in dream. Ideas of movement will, apart from hindrance, always, we may say, produce movement. But always on the other side there is hindrance to a certain degree. There is at least the inertia of existing physical and psychical states, as we may verify when lying awake in the morning before we rise. Ob-

viously, therefore, if in dream the ideas of movement are weak, they may fail to move altogether or to move enough. We may not get beyond the easiest beginnings, such as movement of the tongue or the extremities, and, if the ideas grow stronger, we tend to become awake. Normally we must wake because, through redintegration, the ideas strive to fill themselves out to their usual context, and because that enlargement normally must bring waking and orientation. Otherwise we pass into some abnormal state not to be considered here.

This is the first reason, and it is open to objection as follows. It is not true (we may be told) that in dream all psychical states are weak. External sensations in part are absent and for the rest in general are weakened. And though some sensations of pressure and cold may be exceptions, we need not here take account of them. But with internal sensations and with ideas the case is altered. For ideas and emotions may in dream be unusually strong, as is evidenced by certain physical effects. And we may compare with this the strength of ideas and of emotional states in hypnotism. So that on the whole it is not true that in dream motor ideas are weak.

To this objection we may reply that 'strength' and 'weakness' are to the last degree ambiguous. A very 'weak' state, when hindrance is removed, may dominate mentally. And it is this absence of inhibition which explains the physical effects of dreams, and makes the 'strength' of the emotions very doubtful. So in hypnotism the extreme mobility of the subject seems hard to reconcile with the asserted depth of the feelings. And in hysteria again the self is dominated by moods and ideas which in themselves would seem rather to be weak than strong. Hence the general weakness of dream-states (we may say) has not been disproved by the objection.

Still for our purpose such a general weakness may be inapplicable. For if ideas of motion can dominate our minds in dream, then (it may be pressed on us) this domination should be enough to move. We may reply that in the position of our limbs there is physical inertia, and, so far as that position implies feelings, there is

psychical inertia too. And a certain degree of strength as against this inertia may be lacking to the idea, and so after all no motion need take place. And, as was remarked above, we may verify this when we are reclining and idly entertain the idea of movement. I will, however, not attempt to decide how far in this way the objection is met, but will pass to the second and, I think, the better reason for absence of movement.

(2) If an idea of movement is to move it must not remain general. It must (to speak broadly) be the idea of a particular movement, and that means it must be specified in more or less detail. If the detail is absent, then, in general, no movement will follow the idea. Now as to the extent to which a motor idea must be specified *psychically* there is difference of opinion, and that question I wish to avoid. But what I will assume, and what seems enough for my conclusion, is this. If an idea of movement is to be effective, we must have some perception of the position of our limbs and perhaps also of their relation to the environment. If I do not know where the ground is and where my legs are placed, my idea of running will probably not carry itself out. And to strike an object which has no given relation to my arm, when I also have no idea of that arm's position, seems an idle endeavour. Hence, if from any cause in dream the idea has to remain vague, the action on its side will remain in abeyance. And in dream it seems a fact that ideas of active movement do remain vague, and the reason of this fact can, I think, also be given.

As to the fact, so far as I know, there is little doubt. When in dream I vainly desire to run or to strike, I have not a specified idea of movement proceeding to a certain point and there stopped in a particular way. It is always *somehow* only that I am prevented from acting, and it is only *somehow* that I intended to act. The idea, in brief, remains general, indefinite, and vague.

And for this vagueness we are able to assign a cause. The information necessary to complete my idea in dream is wanting. The content of my dreams usually has no

relation to the actual situation and position of my body. It is unusual even for any one to dream that he is lying in his own bed, the mind turning to other scenes which interest it more. And we may perhaps lay down as certain so much as this—if into my dreams there entered a perception of my actual bodily position in its relation to outer objects, then we should have passed beyond ordinary dreaming and beyond the subject of this paper. For in normal dreams our eyes are shut, and sensations from our skin and muscles in part are absent from consciousness, and are present in part to a very small extent. ‘Muscular sensation’ in general is reduced to such a point as to have always little command, and usually none, over the course of our ideas.<sup>1</sup> And this failure in dream of a stable world in relation to our bodies seems a sufficient reason for our want of self-control. Our ideas wander partly at least because there is no perceived outer object by which to steady them. And for this same reason—for lack, that is, of incoming sensations—ideas of active movement fail, even as ideas, to complete themselves in dream.

Suppose that, while awake, I desire to strike some object. We may all agree that this action is a complicated affair, though we shall differ as to how far the complication is psychical. But at least I must know my attitude and my relation to the object, and to reach my end I must set in motion a train of means. Now part of this train consists in actual movements of my limbs and, more or less, in sensations coming in from these. And if such steps fail, the series is not carried out to its end. If no sensation of any kind tells me that my arm is raised and bent, rather than hanging by my side, I cannot, I presume, go on to strike and to strike in a particular manner. But in dream this defect is normal. The sensations required to carry out the

<sup>1</sup> So far as the sensations from breathing are an exception, they are an exception which seems in accordance with our main thesis. For they tell us nothing or little, I presume, as to the position of the body. I am not here seeking to pronounce on the question how far self-control even in waking depends on a stable sense-world. To a considerable extent it clearly does so depend.

series do not occur, and the idea remains in consequence general and suspended. It is opposed by the body because, so to speak, it is out of relation with the detail of the bodily machinery.

This account seems confirmed by the fact that, where the required perception of the position is less complicated, dream-movements are easier. Thus, for example, it is common to move the lips and tongue and fingers. Whenever the idea happens to agree with the actual position, movement, we may say in general, results. Moved by an idea we can turn the body from discomfort or rub an irritable spot which is near to our hands; and there are other examples, in some of which movement seems to follow an idea. So far as in dream a motor-idea can keep in relation with the actual position of our limbs, so far, given a certain intensity in the idea, movement seems to take place.

And if the idea is strong enough it will, I presume, always produce movement, not the movement required but still movement of a certain kind. But with this it will cause waking or at all events cessation of normal dream.

I have suggested, as some explanation of the absence of movement in dream, first the weakness of ideas, and next specially the vagueness of ideas of active movement. And the cause of this last seems to lie in the failure of corresponding sensations. But at this point we must consider a serious objection. For, while awake, one can imagine active movements in detail and with vividness, and yet no motion of the limbs need really take place. And, if the fact is so, it may seem to have destroyed our explanation. But I venture on the other hand to think that the explanation is confirmed.

As to the fact I shall say little. One can imagine active movements, I believe, in considerable detail though no movement of the limbs takes place. The amount of the detail and the presence, conscious or unconscious, of some change in the muscles do not concern us here. For one can certainly fancy oneself playing at a game with some

particularity, and yet no changed position of the limbs need result.

But between such imagination and dream there is a most instructive difference. For in dream the 'real' body is not present to consciousness, while always in imagination it is more or less perceived and its perception guides and controls us. We have there two worlds, one the world connected with our present real body, and this world, however dim, never ceases to be experienced. And beside this we have the other world which is called imaginary, a world which we merely behold or in which we may also be actors. And, if we act there, we must possess there an ideal body. Now within its own world of course our ideal body can move, but its movements in the main are confined to that world. For the perception of the real body, incompatible with and repelling such movements, forces them to develop themselves wholly in this other world of imagination. And the field of consciousness being thus marked out into two or more provinces, the feeling of defect and of collision is avoided. We may remember bodily movements that are past, or plan others in the future. We may hold ourselves passive spectators of a combat in which our all is at stake, or we may follow a struggle on the boards of a theatre or in the pages of a book. In all these waking states there is some mental orientation and, with that, self-control. And the perception of our real body is in the end the point which serves to give us our bearings.<sup>1</sup> It is that which enables us to distinguish and to live in the various spheres which may be called 'ideal'.

Now whether our waking images have a force and detail, which in dream is wanting, we need not seek to decide.

<sup>1</sup> Of course in these cases (among which falls the more complicated instance of the actor's consciousness) we may, and sometimes do, fail to keep in mind the whole position. We 'forget ourselves' and, if so, a bodily movement may happen at once. But with this lapse we have also passed beyond mere imagination. By a bodily movement I here mean that which would be commonly called an action, as distinct from a mere expression of emotion. In the case of the actor, where real bodily movement takes place, that happens within limits prescribed by the real and not merely by the represented situation.



The main point is that in dream the perception of our real body is absent. And this absence leaves ideas of movement free to develop themselves practically. They blindly struggle to complete themselves in and by relation to the hidden real body, and with that attempt comes failure and a sense of inability and of coercion. While dreaming we, in other words, have no means by which we can distinguish one world from another;<sup>1</sup> and our images thus move naturally to realize themselves in the world of our real limbs. But this world and its arrangement is for the moment out of connexion with our ideas, and hence the attempt at motion, as we have seen, for the most part must fail.

In the above suggested explanation I have not attempted to deal with abnormal dream-states. And how far with regard to normal dreams the account is satisfactory I do not know. Perhaps a psychological explanation of dreams may be impracticable, but it seems not certain, if so, that any other will ever be forthcoming.

<sup>1</sup> There is also a state of half-waking, half-controlled dream, not, I think, experienced by me personally. This state seems to be consistent with and to confirm the above account.

## XIX

### WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE INTENSITY OF PSYCHICAL STATES?

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**I**N this paper I have no special conclusion to advocate, nor, so far as practice goes, do I know what conclusion it suggests. I have found the intensity of psychical states a most ambiguous term, and I have seen no discussion of its sense which has satisfied my mind. And my aim in these pages is to endeavour to re-open the subject. I will attempt first to remove what seem to myself to be some errors and prejudices, and I will then go on to inquire into the meaning of psychical strength.

We may begin with the question whether psychical states are at all comparable in quantity. This has been denied, and psychical states, it has been said, are by their essence not measurable. It is not merely that in practice *we* cannot measure them, it is not merely that we cannot find and state their amounts in common units, but the contention is that in principle they have not degree and in principle do not admit of comparison in quantity. Now this denial to my mind seems based on confusion, and I will try to show that it is not tenable.

It seems evident generally that everything which exists has a quantitative side, but I am not going here to do more than notice this in passing. And the admitted fact that, rightly or wrongly, we do ascribe degree to psychical states, and speak of one toothache and one flash of light as felt to be more than another, I will at present also pass by. But I will meet the denial that mental states are in principle measurable by the question, If so, then what is measurable? If, that is, you cannot compare anything psychical in quantity, is there anything left which could possibly be compared at all? And when this question is faced it surely admits of but one answer. Either you com-

pare what is not psychical, and such a process seems meaningless, or else the psychical must *somehow* admit degrees in quantity. But, if so, the point to be discussed is merely the 'how'.

And this possibly may be all that was meant by the denial of quantity. Our perceptions are psychical states and, whatever else outer things are, we seem to know them only by and in our perceptions. But certain aspects of the perceived both persist and recur and have a special nature. Time and space, in other words, are content of a sort which admits of measurement in quantity, though the perceptions themselves as wholes (it is urged) are not measurable. For, when we measure, it is not the perceptions which are compared but only their aspects, and only the aspects of space and also of time.<sup>1</sup> Yes, I reply, but if this is all you meant, the ground has been changed. For you first denied wholly that psychical states are comparable in quantity. But you now agree that they may possess aspects which are so compared, and all that you deny is that *otherwise and in other respects* they can have comparable quantity. And with this clearly you have deserted your abstract principle. Clearly you have allowed that psychical states may in principle be measured, and your addition 'but only some states and merely in one respect and not in any other', whether it is true or false, is merely an affair of detail. The principle at all events has been abandoned.

Then do you admit, I may be asked, that psychical states *as wholes* are not commensurable? But *as wholes*, I would reply, are they comparable at all? Or rather let us attempt to find out what we mean. In order to compare things—no matter whether they are psychical or not—you must compare them in some respect or not compare them

<sup>1</sup> While agreeing that space in the end is required for accurate measurement, I would point out a feature in time which has been sometimes overlooked. It seems possible, at least theoretically, apart from space, to compare two durations which coexist and start together, but which may differ because one goes on when the other has ceased (cf. Bosanquet, *Logic*, i. 178). This remark has, however, so far as I am aware, no practical bearing.

at all. That seems obvious, and there is something else perhaps not less evident. Things cannot be compared at all unless they are more or less definite, unless they are taken, that is, as circumscribed groups of content. But if so, they must be abstracted and to some extent *not* treated as wholes. If I am to compare two objects, let us say two stones, the stones first must be objects. But this means that they are content more or less abstracted from its sensuous setting. It means that the vague totality of the 'this-now' is ideally mutilated, and that the 'given' is emphatically not taken as a whole. And, if you object to this, of course all comparison is precluded. Then having so got your objects, in order to compare them, you must abstract once more. You must consider them from an identical part of their content neglecting the rest. And if you will not do this, all comparison and measurement is impossible. Your cloth and yard-stick, for example, as wholes are incommensurable.

These remarks seem evident, and let us see how they bear on psychical states. Plainly here we want to know first what 'a psychical state' means. If without abstraction it is to stand for a total 'this-mine', then of course, all comparison being excluded, such a sensuous given is incomparable, and we must be careful how we venture even to call it a 'psychical state'. But if you are willing to distinguish and to abstract, psychical states are at once comparable. We may regard, for instance, my whole condition viewed at two different times. Here by an abstraction we have taken two groups of content, and these groups, the same in some respect or respects, will differ in others. They may thus be compared, and, so far as abstract principle is concerned, their quantity may serve as a point of comparison. For their quantity may be one of the respects in which these groups are the same and different.

Thus psychical states, if they mean the varying conditions of my whole self, may at least in principle be compared and compared in amount. But the term 'psychical state' can have a different meaning. Everything that in

any sense however ideal is present in my experience may loosely be called my psychical state. For every ideal object must also have its side of psychical existence, and that distinction of content in which it consists must happen in me. I see the rose and smell its perfume, and all this content and all its synthesis is thus a fact of mine. Every element and feature in this ideal whole must modify my being, and therefore from this side it can be called my state. But I am not the rose, nor am I odorous, nor do I bloom. Such syntheses in their proper character and in their own internal distinctions, while you rest on these, are not my adjectives. They form part of my psychical facts only so far as you do not stand on their abstracted meaning, only so far as you do not take that except in one with its aspect of psychical event, its bearing on me. And however we formulate this distinction of existence and content, and on whatever principle in the end we take it to rest, to neglect it is everywhere to fall into confusion.<sup>1</sup>

'One rose measured with another may be double in size, but their two perceptions, as my states, are not comparable in quantity, and therefore psychical states are incommensurable.' But in this objection psychical existence and content are confused. For the content of my perceptions is measurable, and (as we saw above) no one could otherwise measure any object. And again my two perceptions, as two additions to my present psychical being, can obviously more or less increase that in amount; and in principle therefore they each must have a quantity. And if all you mean is that the quantity perceived in and by the two ideal contents is not the same quantity which is given in the two psychical facts, that hardly proves that this second quantity is nothing and nonsense. But if again you mean that two psychical states, as two mere sensuous wholes, cannot be compared in amount, that remark surely is irrelevant. For everything taken merely as it is given is of course in a sense unique, and, as we have seen, it is then incomparable even in quality.

<sup>1</sup> While insisting on the vital importance of this distinction, I should perhaps long ago have warned the reader that it should not be credited to me.

'But psychical states after all are not contained the one in the other, and therefore no relation of quantity is possible.' But here once again there seems to be some confusion. Is a yard-stick contained in a roll of cloth? Are two donkeys contained in a horse, or so many horses in a steam-engine? Is a measure in every sense 'contained' in what it measures, or are not such questions misleading? Surely in measurement one does not ask whether one given fact takes in another fact bodily. One asks, since two things have a certain same aspect, how in regard to that aspect they are related. And if the objection asserts that two perceptions, say of a foot and of a yard, are in respect of their content not identical so that the second contains the first—that is to maintain that no measurement anywhere exists. But if it is meant that these two perceptions, as two psychical facts, do not add to my existence, and that my existence is incapable of more and of less—that once more surely would be preposterous. And hence from both these separate aspects it seems quite clear that my perceptions have quantity. And to urge that these two respects are two, and not the same, would be irrelevant. They are not the same, but for all that they both are present, and on their connexion I shall have something to say hereafter. In the same way we might also speak of the relative breadths or thicknesses of a yard-stick and a yard of cloth, or of their relative degrees of weight or tenacity, or odorousness or brightness. And what should we reply to an argument that, because their smells did not contain the same linear units, the smells therefore were not contained the one in the other, and could therefore have no degrees of odorousness at all? Should we not answer, Certainly I do not yet know how to measure these degrees, but you certainly have given me no cause to doubt their existence? Two perceptions of space in respect of that one common content, we agree, are measurable. Does it follow that these perceptions can be quantitatively compared in no other respect at all? Even if that conclusion is true, it is true merely as a matter of fact, and it cannot be deduced from any abstract principle.

'But no,' I may be told, 'for extensive quantities are in principle all that is measurable, while psychical states by their essence are (some or all) merely intensive. And the intensive is either not comparable in quantity at all, or is so only by concomitance with another scale, the distinctions of which are not qualitative.' The whole of this objection, so far at least as it makes any appeal to principle, seems to rest upon error and false assumption. It ignores apparently or forgets doctrines which when recalled remove its basis. For there is really no such thing as quantity *merely* extensive, or as quantitative differences without quality. Because anything is qualitative, that is no reason why it should not also have quantity. And to speak of a scale of degrees, which do not in any sense rest upon units, seems utterly unmeaning.

A perception of quantity involves not merely a diversity of units, but a diversity which also is taken as a single integer. At least otherwise the whole meaning of quantity seems vanished. But this integral aspect must surely imply a quality. A three or four of anything, though not counted, may be a distinguishable plural whole, and, when these wholes are counted, still as wholes of units they possess each a quality. And without this qualitative side it appears impossible to see how or why we should ever have begun to count or measure. For if uncounted totals did not feel different in a certain way, and if this way did not give the feeling of more and less, I cannot imagine how a distinction and summation of units could ever have happened. Quantities are perceived first, I presume, not as being quantities at all, but as differing merely in quality. They are perceived next as also more or less of some quality or thing. They are seen next to arise and to consist in the addition of units, and to have a qualitative side which varies as these units are more and less. The commonest experience shows us, I imagine, that groups of units feel different as wholes, and that, without counting, such felt differences are every day used in estimating quantity. And to speak of quantities as being barely extensive without any intensive aspect, and to talk of numbers as being

merely discrete and not also continuous, is surely to set one-sided and false abstractions in the place of facts.<sup>1</sup>

And what in the end are qualitative states that possess no quantity? Certainly at a low level one can perceive things as being merely Yes or No, or simply again as being 'this' or 'so' and as being not 'that' or 'thus'; but as soon as one has advanced as far as any perception of degree, one has plainly at once both quality and quantity. So that either you must contend that no psychical states have in any sense degree—and that is to set yourself vainly against fact—or you must allow that in principle psychical states can have a quantitative aspect. For that degree means quantity becomes obvious as soon as we reflect. Wherever things are arranged in a scale so that you speak of them in that respect as being more and less, these things so far are quantitative. There is an identical element in these things, and there are diverse amounts of that element. This is what we mean if we mean anything at all by degree, and if we have no such meaning how and why do we come to speak of degree at all? In brief, the attempt to evade this conclusion must lead either to the denial of degree, or to the meaningless assertion of degrees which are not degrees of anything. Nor by bringing in the word 'direction' do we succeed in avoiding this result. Certainly we have qualitative ends which we more or less approach or recede from, but we have here still an identity and difference in quantity. For if the end is a state, more or less of which we already are or possess, the conclusion is evident. And the conclusion is still certain even if the end itself has, as such, no degree. For the road towards that end or away from it contains more and less of some element, and degree consists in the varying amount of this element between our position and the end. The top of the mountain or an extreme right or left may be taken as in themselves without degree; but the road by which we reach them, a road which in some sense belongs to their being, shows units and units. And in a blended colour or taste

<sup>1</sup> I naturally am not pretending here to deal properly with the relations of quality and quantity.



the actual quality of the ends is already present less and more throughout the scale. In short, gradual movement in a certain direction has no sense without identity and quantity. And to take the quantity of the states as the distance 'between' them would give us no help. For a scale of relative distances of course itself implies a more and less of the same something within these distances. And the qualification of the states themselves by the distances (for in fact they are so qualified) adds one difficulty the more to our unsolved problem. But if a serial perception of degrees is to be 'simple', one wonders first what simple means. For if the phrase denies *separability* of aspects, that denial is merely irrelevant, while if it denies their *diversity* it is merely false. And if a perceived series of degrees is not to possess both identity and diversity, by what miracle we take it as a series our phrase does not explain.

'But where there is quantity', it will be objected, 'there must be units many or few. In psychical states, on the other hand, the units cannot be given, and quantity therefore is not predicable.' But, I reply first, there are no units anywhere if not in psychical states. And hence the objection can apply solely to some psychical states, or again to psychical states viewed as such or merely as my adjectives. Now these states, we may admit at once, cannot truly be called measurable, if measurement implies the statement of so many identical units. Such units exist, we may be sure, but we are not able in fact to discriminate and fix them. On the other hand, their discrimination is not required for the perception of quantity, nor is it wanted for measurement, if that term is used in the widest sense. For I can tell that this sheep is larger than that sheep and a third sheep larger than the first, though I cannot say that their amounts differ as say 17, 15, and 18. And water is known by my hand to be hotter or colder, though I must fetch the thermometer to tell you how much. Yet without scales or a thermometer my perceptions have degree, and in a sense they are measurable, though not precisely. For wherever I can say 'more' what I really must say is 'This—and'

or 'This and this—and'; and clearly here we have a difference in which I find the same again together with something else the same. And if so, I must use at least my first object as a unit.<sup>1</sup> I am taking two things together and I find that the second is the first and also something else the same. And when I go on to consider the internal volume and plurality of both my objects, other units are employed. For I perceive that each thing repeats more or less the self-same element. And because I cannot analyse so as to make explicit any ultimate units, you cannot conclude that such underlying units are absent. Such an argument indeed would end in absurdity. It leads to the scale of perceived degrees which are degrees of nothing, and to the similars which in no respect whatever are the same, and to the numerically distinct which in no way whatever is different. And it rests on the superstition that there can be no feature or aspect of things unless we can abstract this and, so to speak, when called on, produce it by itself. But we know that things are the same or different before by comparison we have found where they are identical or differ, and if our comparison fails to find this, our knowledge none the less may remain. And where psychical states are arranged in special scales we must admit units of each scale, though certainly we may be unable to produce them. And since psychical states, where disparate, can still be perceived as diverse in quantity, we must in the end assume units of psychical extent in general. We have at least so far found no argument to show that such units are impossible.

And the attempt to find a scale which is not qualitative at all is in principle irrational. For (a) in the first place no units can be distinct unless they differ, and this difference implies in the end a diverse quality. The 'before' and the 'after' in succession, for instance, are not reversible, and this difference certainly colours the successive units. And in space diversity is not thinkable as a fact apart from 'right' and 'left' and 'over' and 'under', and these differences, essential to distinct units, are surely

<sup>1</sup> Cf. here Mr. Bosanquet's *Knowledge and Reality*, pp. 88-9.

qualitative. So that varying extents of muscular sensation apart from local qualities, except as an abstraction, appear to be meaningless.<sup>1</sup> And (b) in the second place such total extents (as we saw above) have a qualitative side. Each is a whole which has degree and an intensive character. And the ability to count units and to measure, far from removing this feature, implies it throughout as a corresponding and integral aspect. And from another point of view muscular wholes themselves are not commensurable. For every such whole as a concrete psychical state has a particular quality. And such qualities in themselves are not comparable in quantity, nor indeed if you take each as a mere 'this'

<sup>1</sup> In the text I am referring to Münsterberg's doctrine, *Beiträge*, Heft III. He speaks occasionally as if muscular quantities were more and less only through different durations. But it seems clear that this is not meant, and that for the purpose in hand such a difference would not suffice. For with two sensations I should have to wait till one had ceased, in order to know which is the stronger. It would, I presume, be impossible to have muscle-sensations of the same duration but differing in strength, and this, so far as I know, would be contrary to fact. So that extent (as Münsterberg seems occasionally to state) has to be considered as well as mere prolongation. But with extent must come in local differences in quality. Further, the connexion of certain muscle-sensations with certain groups of other sensations seems not treated with clearness. They are connected in such a way that amongst contemporaneous groups the more and less of one feature is perceived without confusion as more and less of the other. And whether the links of these connexions are physical merely or psychical also, seems a question to be raised and answered. But I am not undertaking or venturing to criticize a view which I may not have understood, and I will not even suggest that in its main result—if what that result implies were recognized and the doctrine were modified accordingly—this view is untenable or worse than unproved. A perception of more and less might everywhere, I presume, depend in some sense upon muscle-feeling. But wholly unproved on its negative side the view apparently is. For, in order to exclude all units save those of one sort, surely it cannot possibly be enough to select and cover one part of the ground. All that I would remark on the experiments otherwise is this, that in going from one ratio to another it is not evident that the passage need be direct. For since diverse quantities and ratios have each a general character which can be learnt by experience, it seems possible that such a general impression might unconsciously serve as the intermediary. But I am very far from asserting this to have been the case. I must end with an apology for offering the remarks of one who is scarcely at all acquainted with experimental psychology in general, or specially with the controversial discussion of this point.

are they comparable at all. In short, the objections to the measurement of psychical states apply in principle also to the measurement of muscular sensations. These objections, however, we have so far seen, are founded on confusion.

But I must enter further into a point which I have noticed already. Some perceived wholes, we are informed, are mere multiples of their units, while other wholes are in no sense multiples or contain units at all. Both the assertion and the denial, I answer once more, if so stated, are mistaken. No whole even in space or time is just nothing but its units, or would be a whole at all, if, as a whole, it did not possess a quality. And on the other side, because a whole cannot be regarded as a mere sum, from this you cannot argue that it owns no quantitative aspect, does not contain any units or have any numerical value. It is not true that a difference in kind entails the absence of every corresponding difference in degree, or that this latter difference is not in principle measurable. Indeed, to take for granted that no degrees are possible unless in fact we can measure them, and are able to show and specify the units involved, seems, I venture to repeat, quite arbitrary and indefensible.

On the other hand, these objections enforce an important truth which we are bound to recognize. The relation between the units and the whole is in different cases extremely different, and a question is opened here with which I cannot pretend to deal satisfactorily. That the units should not differ at all in quality seems in principle to be irrational, and that the mere units *make* the whole seems in every possible case to be false. But the characters of various wholes must be taken as connected with their quantitative aspect in various ways and in varying degrees of directness and intimacy. Every whole has a quantity, but except in certain spheres that quantity is not its true expression. From that quantity you could never recover the quality of the whole, you cannot see *how* its character demands a certain quantity, or show how it arises from the conjunction of any units. It is otherwise with space and time, for, if we consider any portion of space, we may view

this as resulting from the synthesis of certain parts. These parts, lying outside each other, can still be recognized unchanged in the whole, and as units they can be identified with other units falling outside this whole. As separated and combined in various ways these units differ, yet in one respect they all remain identical. Thus all parts of space can be regarded as integers, which each possess a quality, and yet come from and are the various multiples of identical units. And hence for us they are commensurable, and we may conclude further that only such wholes as these, if taken in and for themselves, are measurable in fact. This conclusion I think true, and I am in no way endeavouring to dissent from it. I agree that it is only where the parts lie perceptibly outside each other that the whole is able, in itself, in a proper sense to be measured.

But it is another thing to conclude that everywhere else there cannot be quantity or any units or degree, and that measurement is in principle meaningless. The perception of more or less did not begin with numeration. And where a scale, say of blueness, is observed, though the units cannot be separated and shown, it seems impossible either to deny here the presence of degree or to show that it consists in the external synthesis of spatial units. And as there were units of space before by analysis we had found them, so, I presume, there may be units elsewhere which we by no analysis can distinguish. Units may be combined in manners, I suppose, which more or less we cannot follow, and they may be connected more or less unintelligibly for us with the qualitative character of their totals. We cannot in brief deny that wholes may possess necessary numerical ratios, even when we are able neither to identify and count their units, nor to show *how* causally the quality of such wholes is connected with their quantity. Hence, though it is true that only spatial (or temporal) wholes 'contain' perceptibly their components, and that therefore only the spatial aspect of things can in fact be measured, that does not prove either that psychical units which are not spatial are nothing, or that everywhere else but in space and time more and less have no meaning.

In every perceived series of degrees the second member can be seen to involve the first *plus* something else of the same sort. All psychical states, apparently without exception, stand to one another as greater or less or again as equal amounts of my personal being. All psychical states therefore (it would seem to follow) must contain a certain amount of common units. It is only in spatial and temporal wholes<sup>1</sup> that the components fall asunder and are visible side by side. And, apart from this, measurement in the proper sense seems to be impracticable. But, apart from this, measurement does not appear in principle and in the abstract to be impossible.

Up to the present I have been engaged in the attempt to dispel prejudices which have obscured the subject. There is no such thing as quantity merely extensive, or as intensity without quantity. Degrees not resting on units in the end are meaningless. Quantity without an essential qualitative side, and a qualitative object with no quantity, are not conceivable. These are all abstractions falsely supposed to have individual existence. And it is a superstition to hold that in the soul is nothing except that which can actually be abstracted and ideally sundered. Further, we saw that psychical states can be considered in various ways. And it does not follow, because in one way they are not comparable in quantity, that they cannot in quantity be compared at all. And psychical states viewed in a certain manner we found were not comparable even in quality, and the same result holds also with those outward things which no one doubts are measured. Abstract objections of this kind possess no value, and to meet them by looking for a psychical scale, which is quantitative solely, we found was the attempt to combat one superstition by means of another. Further, our inability in fact to measure does not prove the absence of all units. And you cannot argue that, because only what is extended in

<sup>1</sup> I abstain from raising the doubt whether and how far, entirely apart from spatial perception, temporal wholes would retain their character. That every kind of distinction depends on such a perception is an opinion which seems defensible, though I think it is incorrect.

space or time can be counted, therefore more and less consist solely in degrees of that extension. And all psychical states, we may conclude, if not measurable in fact are at least measurable in principle.

And now, having tried to remove a mass of erroneous preconceptions, we must enter on the definition of psychical strength. I will point out first the essential ambiguity of that term; I will go on to state some of its meanings and will endeavour to explain them; and I will ask in the end what is the relation of strength, as actual amount, to psychical force, and what these ideas can be taken in the end to signify. The reader must bear with me if anywhere I dwell on what seems trite and self-evident.

There is nowhere such a thing as absolute strength, but all strength is comparative and relative. Things again are not compared save in a certain respect and through a feature of their content which is the same. And 'more' means more of something in which two things are at once identical and different. It is the more and less of this one feature which gives the direction and the scale of degrees, and without this the word 'degree' would be simply meaningless.

Now where anything is complex and in its content has various features (and certainly all psychical states are complex), this thing may enter into various scales, and it may therefore possess at once a variety of strengths. And since its features perhaps are more or less indifferent to each other, the thing may thus alter independently its various strengths. And then degree or size, we know, is in a sense external and arbitrary, and a thing, while itself unchanged, may thus acquire an altered quantity. For the thing may enter into a different whole and a diverse scale. Thus in a foot-rule each inch, as regards that whole, would remain of the same size, though the whole rule were lessened itself to an inch or enlarged to a mile. And so the inch is (if you please) of various sizes at once. Hence, from the other side, you cannot by any change alter a thing's quantity if you at the same time alter correspondingly its scale; just as, while the thing itself

remains unchanged, its quantity by a change of scale can be altered. These trite remarks perhaps will not seem idle when we consider their application. They show that the intensity of a psychical state may possibly be increased by the mere defect of other states. And it is utterly useless perhaps to argue the question whether attention increases intensity, until you have stated the scale which is concerned, and have asked if attention may not possibly alter that too. For the attention which doubled at once both my rule and my object, would for the purpose in hand double nothing at all. One must beware of arguments from which one would be forced to conclude that no relative size could possibly be observed under a microscope.

Let us pass on from this ambiguity to notice another. Are the intensity and the force of psychical states the same or different, and, if they differ, how is one related to the other? Now, taking a 'state' to mean some limited constituent of consciousness or sentience, we observe that it may seem to prevail or dominate not merely by its own strength. Accompaniments and reactions, intellectual and emotional, and in general the connexion with habits psychical and physical, seem factors here to be considered. And how far the prevalence of a state can be attributed to itself and to its own proper force, and how far such force is identical with mere intensity, becomes at once a problem. But this for the present I must quite disregard. I must provisionally abstract from pleasure and pain and every kind of reaction, and ignore for the present this question of force. I must, that is, at first confine the inquiry to the actual strength of a state when taken by itself. Let us begin then by asking what such strength can mean.

(1) My whole psychical condition at any time may be taken as a limited amount or extent, and some constituent state, say a perception, may be viewed as occupying a certain part of this area. And to this no one, I think, would object save in the interest of some theory. Now by a fiction let us take my whole condition to remain the same in amount, while the perception itself is increased and covers more of this same field of psychical existence. Such



relative quantity, or more or less ground possessed by a state, we may call its varying strength. A state is strong in proportion as it is more relatively to the unchanged amount of my being. But that amount is again itself a relative quantity. For a man's mind contains more than does the mind, say, of a mouse or a butterfly, and once more no one apart from prejudice would call this in question. But if so, we have got the idea of general psychical quantity. We have first of all an amount of myself which is taken as normal, and we have then the minds of other sentient beings compared in quantity with this and viewed as standing towards it throughout in some ratio. So that my perception, regarded as a certain fraction of my normal mind, is expressible also as, and also *is*, some fraction or perhaps some multiple of other minds. We have, in other words, accepted the principle of psychical units. Everything psychical is related in quantity to everything else psychical, though to specify exactly the relation may be out of our power. Any psychical fact (to put it otherwise) must contain a certain number of normal units. This is the sense of strength in which, if we pleased, we might call it absolute. And this meaning, to my mind, is but the expression of good sense and of everyday reason.

But psychical strength can be taken also in another and subordinate sense. The constant quantity of my whole condition was but a useful fiction, and my psychical area is obviously in itself a changing integer. My mind is full and then empty, my feelings are dull or acute, and I am active variedly or seem to sink to a mere passive residuum. So that let a perception itself keep up a uniform strength, let it contain the same amount of any psychical area we take as average or normal, yet to me from time to time it will become less or more. Its sum of psychical units, we may say, remains identical; but since my total state contains a fluctuating number of like units, the relation of the perception to that whole must fluctuate also. Thus the ticking of a clock, forced at one time into the background and with a quantity we neglect, may at another time become the main constituent of our minds. The sensation is more

to me and it is more of me because I am less, and my decrease has bestowed upon it a relative intensity. And though the perception's constant quantity independent of my change is an assumption often untrue, yet the presence of two strengths and two scales appears undeniable. My normal area and my fluctuating area are divergent amounts of psychical units, and they naturally give two different measures of strength. And however much in practice these two strengths may influence and even imply one another, it is clear that, to some extent, they are different and also diverge. Hence we have already two scales and two strengths which may vary independently.

Strength has so far been regarded as quantity of psychical existence, psychical existence measured by (*a*) a fixed, or (*b*) by a fluctuating scale. And without pausing to deal with difficulties, some of which must engage us later, I will proceed to a different meaning of strength.

(2) When we speak of a sensation or perception or idea as being more or less than another, we often fail to be clear as to the scale we have in mind. But 'more of what', 'measured by what scale', and 'relative to what whole'—if we cannot answer these questions, we are speaking to some extent at hazard and blindly. Now two senses of more and less we have noticed already. A perception or idea, viewed as something which has psychical existence, we have seen can be more and less in two different ways. But beside its psychical existence a perception or idea has a reference to an object. And a more or less of some character thus referred may be what we meant when we spoke of the perception's degree. This fresh meaning of strength differs from what we had before, and it once more is able to vary independently. And this meaning itself may be developed in a number of divergent applications. I must endeavour even at some length to make this plain.

A perception or idea, even if you consider that apart from its psychical context and conditions, is never a simple piece of existence. Its character is complex, and of that complex character we use for a certain purpose some feature or features. I am not attempting here to explain

the fact of attribution, but am insisting merely in something implied in that fact. When an object is qualified it is not qualified by that whole state which we call a perception or idea. It is only one or more aspects of that state which become the adjective of our object, and the state itself may hold an indefinite amount of unapplied features. But from this follows at once an important result. The more or less of an idea or of a perception may mean the more or less merely of one aspect employed as an adjective, while, taken as a whole, the perception or idea will not vary in the same ratio. I perceive a foot and I perceive two feet, and in one aspect and character my second perception is the double of my first. It contains, we may say, twice the units *of a particular kind*. But as a mere psychical fact my second perception does not stand in that ratio. It will not on the whole contain a double amount of psychical units, but will be doubled merely with regard to one part of its area. And how that part stands to the rest will depend upon other conditions. The perception of two feet will, to speak in general, occupy more psychical area than the perception of one foot. But you cannot conclude even in general that the second psychical fact is twice the first, or that in any special case it is even greater at all. For you are using scales which are not the same, and which in part may diverge. Your increase or decrease on one scale may therefore with regard to another scale change its ratio, or it may even become indifferent wholly and quite irrelevant, or even actually be inverted.

I take in my mouth a solution with at least two flavours and of a certain temperature. Then at the next moment my perception is changed, and changed in quantity. Its warmth is doubled, or, if you please, its coolness halved. It is twice as sweet, or half as acid, as it was before. And the perception itself—is that double now, or now half what it was, or is that question not, rather, ambiguous and absurd? As psychical facts the two perceptions have (we have seen) a relation in quantity, but as to that relation you can here draw no inference from your data. For the constituents of a perception may vary each in its own scale,

while the whole perception keeps its quantity or varies independently. A perception certainly is more of a fact so far as it is hotter, though whether it is less of a fact so far as it is cooler seems not quite so plain. So far as it is more acid it has more psychical existence—to that I agree. But how if with more acidity goes less sweetness, and if the variations of temperature, or again of viscosity and of volume, have ratios which are more or less indifferent and independent? Surely then to ask at large about more and less, without specifying the element and the scale or scales to which one refers, is to put oneself at the mercy of that blind fortune which does not always smile on the blind. The perception of twice anything is *to that extent* twice the perception, but the perception for all that might be decreased to say one-half or one-tenth. And this is not because mental states have no quantity at all. It is because they have quantity in an indefinite number of senses, and because to some extent these different scales seem independent or may even be related inversely. And where the scales generally correspond the special case is never simple, so that other conditions can affect and may even in the result destroy that correspondence. And if you answer 'but this does not apply where the states are simple', I admit this readily. But I pass it by as being itself wholly without application.

These considerations gain force when we pass from perceptions to ideas. I do not mean that with ideas we find any new principle at work, but the distinction between applied content and psychical existence becomes more palpable. All content of course has psychical existence, and more of that content, we have seen, is *so far* more of psychical existence. But in an image the aspect which we consider may form so small a part of the whole image, and that aspect may also in amount be so inversely related to other aspects, that in the end no conclusion can possibly be drawn. I perceive a light and am to imagine it twice as large. But suppose that the perceived light is the noonday sun. Must I imagine this not only increased in area, but also maintaining a character in proportion to its size? And if I cannot do this, am I prevented from think-

ing of it as doubled? All that is wanted, surely, is for a perception to be so taken in one character as in that respect to be identifiable in other contexts. And if this is done, and if with regard to that character internal consistency is preserved, surely everything else may be taken as freely variable. The intensity of my doubled sun-image in heat and light is wholly irrelevant. Nay, its actual area as measured by my perception is irrelevant also. It is the ratio of the imagined sun to an imagined sky with which I have to do, and the absolute size of my scale does not matter. My image must preserve identity with my perception, or else I do not think at all; but the identity here does not consist in absolute area or intensity. The quantitative ratio therefore between the perception and its doubled image is here wholly irrelevant and may be unknown.

And when without using concrete imagery we form ideas of our sun, the same conclusion is more glaring. I am to think rapidly of my perceived object being changed so as to be larger, brighter, redder, and hotter, and let us now say not twice but, if you please, ten or a thousand times; or again let each attribute, if you please, vary diversely in increase. What happens here, I suppose, is that I possess the idea of a general or abstract scale of quantity, and that I identify a place or places on this general scale with a feature or features of my perceived sun. And where I think rapidly there seems to result no individual modified image, but a mere putting-together of two or more abstract and sundered characters. We may realize perhaps even more clearly what this means, if we imagine ourselves to think of our perceived sun's total disappearance, and then carefully reflect on what that thought must imply. But, without pausing to consider this, we perhaps may take our conclusion as made good. At the point we have reached psychical intensity can be seen not to be meaningless, but to have acquired an indefinite number of divergent meanings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It should now be evident that I can have an idea of psychical strength, and that I can have that idea either strongly or weakly. The aspect of a certain amount or of a certain place on the psychical scale can be given

The result we have so far reached may be briefly resumed. (1) Everything psychical has an intensity, first, of psychical being. It occupies an area and contains units which are more and less in amount relatively to my passing state, or more and less measured by some fixed scale of psychical existence. And, because my passing state has a quantity which varies, these two psychical intensities partly diverge. (2) But superimposed on and parallel with these two degrees of psychical existence, we have also a variety of scales of special content. In regard to one or more of their features psychical facts are related in amount, and they give us degrees of this or that special quality, such as heat, smell, or colour. Now increase of one feature means increase, so far, of psychical existence, but the ratio of increase in special quality has no fixed relation to the increase of psychical existence. Suppose, for instance, my psychical condition now = 1000 units, and that in this total my perception of colour = 100. Now suppose one feature of this colour-perception = 10, what is the intensity of this feature? It is clearly one-tenth or one-hundredth as you measure it by each total. And my present state, we must not forget, is really a fluctuating amount. It contains now, let us say, 1000 standard or normal units, but it may later contain say 1200 or again say 750. Here is a new sense in which also my special perception has got intensity, and the reader, if it amuses him, may find the fractions.

Thus more and less on any special scale must mean also more and less of psychical existence, but how much more and less cannot in general be decided. And this truth in an ordinary complex case is quite irrelevant. For gain and loss within the whole psychical fact may balance each other, and the total amount may remain the same while its factors are changed. Thus a perception may in one respect be more and in another respect less, while as a psychical quantity it remains the same. And with the psychical facts called ideas, though no new principle is itself with varying amounts of unemployed detail and so of psychical existence.

introduced, the multiplication and involution of divergent scales becomes more glaring. The former meanings of intensity all remain, but other scales and other meanings are superimposed on the ambiguous complex.

But in principle, I would add, this result is not sceptical. It would be sceptical if it showed that there were no scales at all, or that in themselves scales varied unworkably. And how far in practice amounts can be measured I do not inquire. But to insist that quantities all are relative to some scale; that one thing in various ways can be relative to various amounts; that, so long as in any total the internal ratios do not change, other changes may be irrelevant; and that before you ask about degree you should know first what scale is in question;—such conclusions seem dictated by ordinary reason. And from another side our result is hostile to scepticism. For all psychical phenomena, it urges, can in principle be measured. They can all in principle be taken first as various amounts of existing psychical content, and then also as special amounts on diverse scales of content variously specialized. And everything psychical in the end must be taken as in principle somehow commensurable. This conclusion I will proceed to defend against several objections.

An objection may be urged first against the idea of measurable psychical existence. Quantity, it may be said, is predicable only of content made the adjective of an object, and psychical existence, whether by excess or defect, cannot possess this character. But the objection would rest on a mistake. The merely 'given' taken as such, we saw above, is not comparable, but the merely 'given' is not the same as psychical existence. Psychical existence implies the construction of a soul-substantive enduring in time and owning adjectives which through change preserve a basis of identity. Such an arrangement clearly transcends any deliverance of sense, since it involves the construction of a soul-object qualified by content. And of such an object quantity can in principle be predicated. And to urge that my experience is not throughout perceived and treated as my adjective—that,

when I am self-conscious, what I perceive must be less than what I am—would be irrelevant. For everything that I am, though not perceived, is in principle perceptible. In its general character and in the mass it can thus be taken as adjectival content, and can be predicated of the ideal construction which I call my existence. Nor is there anything in me which is unable so to be predicated.

In these inquiries, while distinguishing, we must not divide. The higher and more specified state of mind does not banish the lower. It is superimposed on, it still implies, and from one aspect it still is at the stage of the unspecified basis. Everything in experience is felt and is given first as a 'this-now'. Then the content of experience separates itself into groups, a 'me' and a world of 'not-mes', ideal objects to which all is referred as adjectival. And the same felt content, we must never forget, is used at once to qualify both the self and the not-self. There is first the feeling-green, then the sensation of something-green and of my so perceiving it. But if these two groups and their adjective and their relation were not felt, they would not be experienced at all. And, from the other side, the feeling which precedes, and which also underlies and contains the distinction of me and not-me, can, when reflected on, be taken as the adjective of either of these objects. The history of my whole experience is an adjective which has its place in universal existence, and is also itself the private existence of my soul. And whatever advance in further distinction and ideal development takes place, the aspects both of feeling and of psychical existence still persist and are essential. But where there is existence, there also we must have more and less. And with these brief remarks I must leave the subject of psychical existence. Objections urged against it may seem subtle, but will be found in the end to rest on confusion.<sup>1</sup>

I pass from these refined doubts to dwell on the idea of psychical units. I do not contend (I may repeat) that

<sup>1</sup> The question, whether for psychical reaction something more than existing content must be assumed, will be touched on hereafter.



such units can be fixed and used in practice, but in principle their existence must be assumed. Psychological states of every kind can as against one another seem more and less, a toothache, for example, can appear weaker or stronger than an exercise in logic. And if in these different things were nothing in which as amounts they were identical, and more and less of which they possessed, I do not see how they could come as members in one scale. It is here with quantity as it is with quality. If smells or if colours have no common quality, why do I treat each class as if it possessed it? And if the quality of all psychological states had no one common feature, how could I feel them as entering into and making up my being? 'To reply 'then show your quality, and show your units bare' is surely irrational, for, by the hypothesis, as bare they do not exist at all. They could be shown only as abstractions, as single features specially noticed in concrete wholes, and how far in each case the abstraction is definite and useable, is of course a further question. I have two greens which are the same in green, I have a green and a red which both are colours, I have a colour and a sound which both are sensations, and I have a colour and a toothache which are both the same as being felt and as being mental states. I have two blue-greens in which the green is more and less, and two greens the same but more and less in brightness or in area, and a colour-sensation fluctuating as more and less against an invading sound, and, when the sound is removed, at once becoming more of me. There are differences specifying a lowest basis of sameness, and then these differences themselves are further specified, and as identities they underlie higher distinctions. And against this essential and all-pervasive evolution to object, 'But show me the identity bare, and then I will believe', is surely blind irrelevancy. For a bare identity or difference is just that which, if the view objected to is true, is *ipso facto* impossible. In other words an identity or a difference is by its essence relative. Thus two perceptions are related first as quantities of general psychological existence, they are related next as fractions of my present condition, they

are related next as two perceptions of length, and so on indefinitely. In each respect they contain relative amounts of one common something, and these identities persist whatever more specified identities are superimposed. Thus units of psychical existence, we may admit, cannot be distinguished and fixed, but they seem open for all that to no rational doubt. Let us go on to another point.

There is an instructive, if obscure, discussion by Lotze<sup>1</sup> on the strength of ideas, a discussion which no German writer at least might have been expected to ignore. Into this as a whole I regret that I cannot here enter, but on one point I will comment. Ideas, Lotze seems to tell us, themselves cannot be stronger or weaker. For ideas are not what they mean, and they may signify strength, but, it seems, themselves cannot possess it. Now this distinction of existence from meaning I gratefully endorse, but from the conclusion which seems based on it I have to dissent. For in the being of an idea I find always psychical matter extraneous to its meaning, and this unemployed content, I must insist, can vary in quantity, while the specific meaning of the idea remains identical. And though one aspect is able to react on the other, they need neither have the same quantity nor preserve the same ratio. In something of the same way in a perception of heat, volume and degree may be confused, but for all that each aspect possesses its own proper amount. Now, like every other state, an idea must have its quantity of psychical existence, measured by a normal scale, or measured also by my passing condition. Nay, we have seen above, that, in order to mean more or less, a state must, in that one aspect and merely so far, have more psychical being. And right as it is to say with Lotze that ideas are not what they mean, it is also true that ideas can mean nothing but that which they are. For unless a thing has, and to that extent is, a quality, I cannot myself understand how it goes about to show

<sup>1</sup> *Mikr.i.* 229, *Met.* § 262. The meaning and position given to *Erregung* strike me as obscure; nor do I perceive, again, how far Lotze realizes that any alteration of anything in degree is, in itself and merely so far, a certain change in quality.

it.<sup>1</sup> The idea of the extended has extension,<sup>2</sup> the idea of the heavy has weight, the idea of the odorous has smell, and the idea of pleasure, beyond all controversy I should have thought, exists and is so far pleasant. But the specific aspect of the idea, though not destroyed, can be utterly overborne, the truth and the existence of that aspect fall in different worlds, and their intensities, though weighable and not mere shadows, are not weighed merely in one balance.

But, I may be told, you are avoiding the point of the objection. For with ideas we have relational activity, and of this activity there are no degrees. And though the product has degrees, they are not degrees of psychical strength. My desire, I reply, is not to avoid this point, but, if that be possible, to discover in what sense I am to take it. Naturally I cannot enter here into the special nature of the relational consciousness, nor ask with what meaning or what absence of meaning 'activity' may be used.<sup>3</sup> But if I am to understand that relations and distinctions are not psychical facts, I answer respectfully that I find it quite otherwise. But, if they are facts, then at once I presume they have psychical existence. And if you tell me that I can have an idea or perception which contains a relational complex, and that this complex can *ad libitum* be made more complex, while its psychical existence is not thereby increased, and while the whole perception occu-

<sup>1</sup> The existence of conventional and arbitrary signs, and of mere accredited representatives, forms no valid objection. For, unless the meaning is *somehow* there and belonging to the sign, the sign would be no sign. The question is merely as to *how*, within the whole actual sign, the meaning and the existence are in each case connected—whether, that is, they are connected indirectly and through external association and credit, or directly and through an internal property. But, for the purpose of the text, this question of *how* the sign possesses the content it signifies seems quite irrelevant. Here (though not everywhere) the above distinction has no importance.

<sup>2</sup> I hope in a future paper to return to this point.

<sup>3</sup> The doctrine for instance advocated by Brentano, *Psychologie*, pp. 157 foll., as to the relative intensity of *Vorstellen* and *Vorstellung* I could neither affirm nor deny. For all I know, it may be plainly tautologous or again plainly false. For I at least, until I am told, do not know what an 'act' is to mean. And I must be pardoned if from time to time I repeat this, and repeat also that I am not yet ashamed of my ignorance.

pies no more room in my mental area—I reply that once more you seem to be in collision with palpable fact.<sup>1</sup> And I am curious to know the principle on which more is to happen *in* me, when it is not to happen *to* me. But if all you mean is that a whole relation is both more than its terms and also is less; if you mean that the terms, taken either without the relation, or taken again not in that aspect in which they are related, have psychical strength, and that *this* strength is irrelevant to the essential content of the relational whole;—your conclusion has vanished. For you started with denying that the ideal whole has any psychical strength, and what you now deny of it is merely the psychical strength of, in short, something else. Because the strength of a related complex is not that of its unrelated factors, nor of its factors so far as they possess unrelated aspects—you assert that it possesses no strength at all. And this conclusion, false in principle, in practice collides with facts.<sup>2</sup>

In brief, a perceived or thought relational whole must be a psychical state, and whatever other aspects and scales of quantity this perception may develop, it must through all from one side still remain a psychical state. It must be measurable, that is, in the scale of psychical existence. And with this I must pass on to another branch of the inquiry into strength.

Strength has so far been used in an arbitrary sense. I have taken it as equivalent to extent or actual area of psychical being. And a 'state of mind' again has been understood arbitrarily, for I have treated it as something with an existence clearly circumscribed. But these assumptions have now to be discussed and corrected.

<sup>1</sup> I am not here denying all difference between clearness and mere strength. But I am urging that increase of the first must *so far* mean increase of the second.

<sup>2</sup> The same principle is involved in the objection that a stronger idea or perception is a different state, that it has a different content and not the same content to a different degree. Yes, I reply, but if some part of the content is always irrelevant, the idea or perception, increased and so different with regard to that aspect, may in respect of its essential aspect remain the same. And if so, the same idea *will* have different strengths..

. In a particular state of mind, say a sensation, perception, or idea, what is the state itself and how much is mere accompaniment or result? Can you exclude the latter element and, if so, where and how can you draw the line? States are, for instance, painful and pleasant, but what is here the conjunction or connexion? Have we adjectives or have we accompaniments or once more mere results, and, if results, to what precisely are the results to be attributed? And a state also has irradiation, physical and psychical; it spreads in itself and it spreads in its effects; and whether this spreading is to qualify the state and, if so, how far, is a question not easily answered. But since 'irradiation' is an idea perhaps not wholly clear, let us pass from it to consider what is implied in 'reaction'. A sensation is qualified by reaction, and how is the reaction provoked? Is it due to the mere strength of the sensation or to its quality or to both? And, when the reaction is there, in what sense does it belong to the sensation? Exclude the case of general shock, and confine your attention to special responses to a special stimulus. There is a 'disposition', physical merely or psychical as well, and this latter generally at least, I presume, is acquired and has the form of a mental habit. Now if the sensation (to speak in general) has a quality which corresponds to the habit, a reaction takes place which qualifies the sensation. But what is here the sensation itself, and what are mere results? And beside the 'strength' of the sensation, has it got an independent 'force' to produce such results?

A state, we may reply, only is that which at present it is. And what it may become, or what it has become, is, so far, a different state potential or actual. But this answer, it is clear, does not dispose of the problem as to force, and even as regards the individual being of the 'state' it offers no solution. For the question was as to the boundaries and limits of this being. So suppose that the state is distinguished from what it causes and becomes, yet even then can you divide it now from what it is not? For any sensation, perception, or idea is surely the product of abstraction. It is a special distinguished content which

has also a psychical existence. And the difficulty is here not to distinguish merely the 'what' from the 'that', but rather to draw a line between the existence and its conditions, between the 'that' and the 'how'. And this ideal partition of an undivided psychical whole is always more or less arbitrary, and it tends more and more, as you descend, to become even impracticable. For if you pass from an idea, and again from a perceived quality referred to an object, and come down to a sensation which is merely given as a certain something—the 'that' and its 'how', as you descend, become steadily perplexed. And to separate at the lowest level the existence of this somewhat from its connexion with my total state, and from its colouring of pleasure or pain, becomes in practice impossible. The individuality of a psychical fact is thus always an abstraction, it is always to some extent arbitrary, and it tends in part to become an idea which in practice is inapplicable. But within limits the use of this abstraction seems possible and legitimate.

We are however met by further troubles when we consider the relation of strength to force. For we have taken strength so far to mean extent of psychical area, the occupancy of so much ground or the possession of so many units. And this idea we found clearly to be legitimate and even necessary. But we must beware of misunderstanding, and there are cautions which I must be allowed to repeat. There is no psychical empty space in which psychical states contend. There is merely a common underlying substance or quality which all such states contain and which each further specifies. It is on the basis of this indwelling identity, and it is only by virtue of it, that states are able to struggle at all. And this quality, regarded itself as specified into a plurality and into distinctions of more and less, affords units and degrees of psychical amount. And because our whole psychical condition, taken at an average or at any one time, is a limited quantity—the ground or area occupied by a partial 'state', and the units of existence which it usurps, can be thus in principle defined. Whether in practice such units can be

shown, and can be used for exact measurement, is a question I pass over. But in any case I repeat and I would insist that the units and the underlying quality are merely abstractions. To regard them as capable of existence barely in their own character, and to demand their production and their exhibition naked, I must consider ridiculous. But I urge on the other side that to deny the existence of an identity, when naked, agrees perfectly with the assertion of its existence when clothed. Or (if you prefer the metaphor) the soul keeps no stuff not worked up into garments, but because of this to deny the sameness and the more and less of a common stuff would be quite irrational. Or the soul, we may say, can let no building-land wholly unbuilt-on. But such a condition does not exclude its power to afford an indefinite amount of area and for any kind of superstructure.

But if strength is the same as actual extent or amount of units, then strength is a narrower term than force, and it will not cover all the facts. For if a state is strong it should dominate, it should hold its ground, it should repel and more or less extrude what attacks or even does not attack it. And, without acting thus, it must be ready, when called on, to maintain itself. Its strength in brief seems to be extension not actual only, but also potential.<sup>1</sup> And if it maintains itself by an extraneous help, are we to call that its strength? The position of pain and pleasure, we saw above, gives rise to questions. And again a state apparently may dominate by its relation to other existing states, and also by its correspondence with 'dispositions' physical and psychical. And it may even be said to dominate not merely through actual support, but by help which is indirect and even conditional. An idea, we may say, is strong when it itself is constantly suggested, and when any opposing elements, as they arise, provoke a reaction which excludes them.

We have therefore to introduce here the idea of potential

<sup>1</sup> In what follows we are on ground which is covered by the term 'interest'. It is in my opinion a mistake to try to limit the use of this term to denote pleasure and pain.

energy. It is of course mythological, but its employment seems forced upon us. A state which corresponds to 'dispositions' has a key which fits the wards, and so this state can unlock energy, which, being unlocked, it then harnesses to its cart, or astride of which it gets and calls this its own strength. It is perhaps well to use metaphors which confess themselves absurd, if we desire wholly to escape from domination by mere metaphor. However, every man here must follow his own taste. And some writers prefer to speak of a 'functional disposition' as if they knew what that was, when perhaps any one can see that they have never faced the question. To me a 'disposition' is a convenient but clearly a mythological way of stating a general fact or law, a way of psychical happening which I do not pretend to understand. When certain things, physical and psychical too, have happened already, then, given something else under certain conditions, a certain result will take place.<sup>1</sup> And in the present case this conditional result is the addition of strength, and a psychical state therefore can 'have' potentially the energy which, when become actual, it appropriates.

But when this all has been admitted, our difficulty remains. For (a) the strength thus produced seems hardly to belong to the state itself, nor (b) does the state act as a stimulus by reason of its mere strength. (a) If a state has force to set free energy under certain conditions, the issue of this energy, we may admit, in the end is increased psychical area. Thus force is not strength, if strength means actual area or existing quantity, but force is so called only because it means potential strength, and because, given the conditions, it passes into amount of psychical units. And all so far seems tenable. But why, on the other hand, the state is credited with all the strength, which conditionally it provokes into being, seems not intelligible. The stimulus may itself be destroyed by that explosion, the outcome of which you desire to place to its credit. And if this has a sense, surely in the end that sense is arbitrary and useless. Even where the stimulus survives as an element in

<sup>1</sup> Compare *E.* xii. 214-15.



that increase it has provoked, even where the conditions are ascertained, and where in the whole result the stimulus is so placed that that whole is regarded as its adjective—even here to credit it beforehand with the incoming amount is an evident liberty. Even here its force will be its credit merely, and not its actual possession of existing units. And otherwise the force of a state is but the fact that conditionally it may act as a stimulus, and so conditionally produce some increase of some psychical extent. But by what right that conditional extent is to be called *its* strength is not apparent at all.

(b) Nor even as a stimulus does the state act by virtue of its strength. To act it must indeed possess some strength, a minimal amount that will vary with varying conditions. But its special act is certainly not the effect of this mere general strength. For we take the state to be acting not as a bare shock, but by reason of and through its special quality. And if it has the quality required, the degree of that may within limits be irrelevant. But this quality on the other hand cannot be resolved into amount of psychical units. You cannot say that the state stimulates thus or thus, simply because its strength is so much. You may by a legitimate abstraction consider that strength, that number of psychical units, without regard to any quality. But you cannot derive the qualities and their effects from a mere number of units and show them as its result. And to speak of a special arrangement or grouping of these units would be, so far as I see, to use words without a meaning. We have a general quality, and within that quality we have strengths that vary, and we have special qualities, and within each of these we have again varying strengths. And the second set of distinctions we regard as superimposed on the first. They specify the underlying substance, and to their specific natures a certain amount of this substance in each case corresponds. But to deduce the qualities from the units of common substance, or to make an equation between these terms, seems out of the question. Given a certain quality you have somehow implied a certain quantity, but, given the same quantity, the

same quality is not necessarily implied. And, if so, the force by which a state maintains or increases its ground will in the end diverge from the extent of its actual occupancy. And by the use of the term 'potential' we make no real advance in understanding. For the force which potentially is strength, in the sense of occupied area, either cannot be taken as belonging at all to the actual state itself, or belongs to it not as an amount but as a special quality.

If there are any results from this inquiry it is time we gathered them. (1) The force of a mental state is a phrase which is most ambiguous. It seldom, if ever, means the same as its actual quantity or area. (2) Psychical strength, taken as an amount of psychical existence or a number of its units, is a conception valid and perhaps useful. Its scale may be relative to my varying condition, but again is average, normal, or absolute. (3) The units of this scale probably cannot be shown, and certainly cannot exist bare; but as an abstraction we seem forced theoretically to assume them. (4) Everything in the soul which in any sense becomes more or less, has *so far* a more or less of psychical existence, but only *so far*. Every 'state' is complex, and the whole state therefore may have a quantity which bears no fixed ratio to any one aspect. (5) Within our psychical content there thus fall scales indefinite in number and more or less independent and able to diverge. Hence a single state may vary quantitatively in various respects, as well as in respect of psychical existence. And to a certain extent these respects may diverge in quantity. But the practical outcome seems merely this, that before we talk of intensity and before we predicate degrees of strength, we should first of all define its kind and the scale we are to employ. Otherwise may come discoveries where no one knows what is discovered, and controversies where in the end no one understands what is in dispute. But others must judge to what extent this reflection has practical bearing. My object in this paper has been to raise some doubts on an interesting question, the difficulties of which, it appears to me, are not sufficiently recognized.

XX  
ON THE SUPPOSED USELESSNESS OF THE  
SOUL

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THE following considerations must not be taken as quite expressing my own beliefs, nor again are they offered as original. But they will perhaps bring some thoughts together in a way which may be useful.

There is a view as to the connexion between body and soul which seems to grow every day more in fashion. On this view the bodily sequence is wholly independent of mind. It goes on as it would go on if nothing psychical were there. The soul is somehow an adjective which makes no difference to its substantive. It is the whistle of a steam-engine which has no effect on the engine's movement; for the soul is somehow that kind of whistle which expends no steam.

Now, though this view is respectable, it seems none the less ridiculous, but my first object is rather to show its connexion with another prevailing doctrine. I refer to what we may perhaps call Darwinian teleology. Everything which on a certain scale persists must be taken as useful. It was not made to be useful, but, if not useful, it would by now have been unmade. So that whatever on a certain scale has arisen and has persisted must certainly be useful. Now, if this doctrine is good, I do not see why we should not apply it to the soul, unless we are prepared everywhere to make the soul an exception to everything except disadvantage; and no one, I believe, has as yet openly contended for that principle. But when the Darwinian view is applied to the soul, the soul apparently must be of service. Pleasure and pain, volition and thought, must after all be there for something, and must after all do something. For otherwise by this time they would surely be no longer there at all; since, if so, they would be varieties useless and yet persisting.

.. The above reflection is obvious and, I presume, must be answered as follows. The soul is useless, but on the other side the soul costs nothing. To be pleased or pained brings no good, but brings also no harm. And thus the soul, being something which with regard to advantage or hindrance is nothing, falls wholly outside the Darwinian doctrine. But this answer can hardly stand unless we are ready to accept the old wives' story of the whistle blown and blown by nothing.<sup>1</sup> And if we hold to the belief that something comes from something, and that from nothing nothing comes, we shall have to seek for a less irrational proof that the soul may be useless.

If we consider that, on any view, the soul covers a large area of fact, if we decline to believe that this mass of existence is produced from and costs nothing, if we reflect further that fruitless expenditure is disadvantage which (it seems) must eventually destroy itself—we shall find it impossible to take the soul as being of no service at all. The soul must be useful, but it may be useful perhaps in a qualified sense. It may afford an advantage perhaps which is but conditional, provisional, and temporary. The soul in other words, though of service now, in the end may become useless. And in the end (we must add) having become useless the soul will cease. We can find also some further reason to expect such a supersession of the soul.

Every organism, we may anticipate, will become perfect. They will all in the end be adapted to their environments, and will be internally free from defect and jolting. But, if the soul is consciousness, the soul in its essence seems to involve imperfection. For consciousness consists in a process of distinction and relation, and it implies some collision. That which later we know as choice between incompatibles is at first certainly not present, but at the very dawn of consciousness we have some struggle between suggestion and fact. And if it were not so, and if we felt nothing of a baulked attempt, we never, it would appear, should become conscious at all. But consciousness, so

<sup>1</sup> Surely we have not got to take *this* as one of the 'fairy tales of science'?

living through friction, through delay and wavering, tends, as defects are removed, itself to pass away. Thus habits of action and of perception, acquired haltingly and with painful prominence of each struggling detail, become automatic more and more and, with that, unconscious. From which we conclude that, when on the whole adaptation has grown perfect, consciousness will have become superseded wholly.

This conclusion, if correct, seems the solution of our difficulty. Consciousness, though useless (we may say) both in principle and in prospect, will none the less be at present of service. Or at the least it will be the necessary accompaniment of what is useful. It will be that crying of an imperfect machine which arises from friction. This friction is expensive to the machine, and in principle it is not useless merely, but positively injurious. But because inseparable from the machine at a certain stage of its development, the friction must be taken as an advantage to what owns it. But when by Evolution machines grow perfect and friction gradually is reduced to nothing, consciousness then will meet the destiny assigned to it by principle. It will have become useless wholly and, with that, will cease to exist. And, with that, the world will have become perfect and purely physical.

There are, however, some objections which this view perhaps too much ignores. (i) For it has assumed, first, that the soul is the same as consciousness. But consciousness, with its distinction of subject from object and of objects from each other, is perhaps after all not so wide as sentience. But if the unconscious may be psychical, perfection after all need not be physical merely, but may be a sentient whole in which the oppositions of consciousness are transcended. And this psychical fact cannot be proved as above to be useless even in the end. (ii) Further, even if the principle were not unsound, the detail seems refractory. Without a process in time it is hard to see how any machine is to work and go. But with a process the door seems opened to accidents and jars, and so to outbreaks of consciousness. And since new machines

have, I presume, to grow, and since old machines will, I suppose, wear out, perhaps after all perpetually there must be infantile and senile relapses into soul. And in short the Evanescence of Imperfection seems little better than the craze of a theory-monger. The facts rebel, and the principle seems mainly prejudice. The sentient machine of the Universe, though perfect, may by its essence involve collisions and friction between its parts, together with an outcry of consciousness. And what is above consciousness may still contain it as a necessary factor, while consciousness thus always, and yet never, is superseded.

The view of the soul as the result of friction seems in every way untenable, and to be oneself the self-awareness of jolts in a half-finished machine would be too stupid altogether. The distinction we draw between friction and work depends after all, I suppose, on a selected point of view. And if we wish to insist that the harmonious movement of a physical machine is by itself the one work, and that all beyond this is injurious or at least superfluous—perhaps we might begin by asking whether our point of view is rational or arbitrary.

Living once near a quarry on a hill, I was persecuted by a strange noise. It came from a wooden brake screwed against the wheels of descending and loaded carts. And listening to this noise, I fancied it the cry of some soul forced at intervals out of matter by too rude motion. And I tried to imagine the thoughts of such a soul and the views which it might take of its own meaning and destiny. It would perhaps at first feel sure that its own feeling was an end in itself, and that except for the sake of that or something like it nothing existed. But after many vagaries this soul might come to very different results. It might reflect perhaps how its self was engendered by accident and defect, and how a perfect cart would admit no friction nor be liable to any soul. A perfect cart would be motion unhindered, harmonious, and silent. Or this soul might think itself in any case but parallel to the physical motion. It might consider itself to be certainly in a sense dependent on the cart's movement, yet not so as to be produced

at its expense, or as in any way to make any difference to it. But it struck me then that this last view was perhaps the most foolish of all. For that something could come from nothing and lead to nothing, or that something could happen with no expense to anything, remains always irrational. And I should dare to repeat this though I had thrown at my head some word longer even than 'psycho-physical'.

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